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THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1888.

A LIFE'S MORNING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'DEMOS,' 'THYEZA,' ETC.

CHAPTER I.

AN UNDERGRADUATE AT LEISURE.

WILFRID ATHEL went down invalided a few days after the beginning of Trinity term. The event was not unanticipated. At Christmas it had been clear enough that he was overtaxing himself; his father remarked on the fact with anxiety, and urged moderation, his own peculiar virtue. Wilfrid, whose battle with circumstances was all before him, declined to believe that the body was anything but the very humble servant of the will. So the body took its revenge.

He had been delicate in childhood, and the stage of hardy naturalism which interposes itself between tender juvenility and the birth of self-consciousness did not in his case last long enough to establish his frame in the vigour to which it was tending. There was nothing sickly about him; it was only an excess of nervous vitality that would not allow body to keep pace with mind. He was a boy to be, intellectually, held in leash, said the doctors. But that was easier said than done. What system of sedatives could one apply to a youngster whose imagination wrought him to a fever during a simple walk by the seashore, who if books were forcibly withheld consoled himself with the composition of five-act tragedies, interspersed with lyrics to which he supplied original strains? Mr. Athel conceived a theory that such exuberance of emotionality might be counterbalanced by

studies of a strictly positive nature; a tutor was engaged to ground young Wilfrid in mathematics and the physical sciences. The result was that the tutor's enthusiasm for these pursuits communicated itself after a brief repugnance to the versatile pupil; instincts of mastery became as vivid in the study of Euclid and the chemical elements as formerly in the humaner paths of learning; the plan had failed. In the upshot Wilfrid was sent to school; if that did not develop the animal in him, nothing would.

He was not quite three-and-twenty when the break-down removed him from Oxford. Going to Balliol with a scholarship, he had from the first been marked for great things, at all events by the measure of the schools. Removal from the system of home education had in truth seemed to answer in some degree the ends aimed at; the lad took his fair share of cricket and football, and kept clear of nervous crises. At the same time he made extraordinary progress with his books. He acquired with extreme facility, and his ambition never allowed him to find content in a second place; conquest became his habit; he grew to deem it the order of nature that Wilfrid Athel's name should come first in the list. Hence a reputation to support. During his early terms at Balliol he fagged as hard as the mere dullard whose dear life depended upon a first class and a subsequent tutorship. What he would make of himself in the end was uncertain; university distinctions would probably be of small moment to him as soon as they were achieved, for already he spent the greater portion of his strength in lines of study quite apart from the curriculum, and fate had blessed him with exemption from sordid cares. He led in a set devoted to what were called advanced ideas; without flattering himself that he was on the way to solve the problem of the universe, he had satisfaction in reviewing the milestones which removed him from the unconscious man, and already clutched at a measure of positive wisdom in the suspicion that he might shortly have to lay aside his school-books and recommence his education under other teachers. As yet he was whole-hearted in the pursuit of learning. The intellectual audacity which was wont to be the key-note of his conversation did not, as his detractors held, indicate mere bumpiousness and defect of self-measurement; it was simply the florid redundancy of a young mind which glories in its strength, and plays at victory in anticipation. It was true that he could not brook the semblance

of inferiority; if it were only five minutes' chat in the Quad, he must come off with a phrase or an epigram; so those duller heads who called Athel affected were not wholly without their justification. Those who shrugged their shoulders with the remark that he was overdoing it, and would not last out to the end of the race, enjoyed a more indisputable triumph. One evening, when Athel was taking the brilliant lead in an argument on 'Fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,' his brain began to whirl, tobacco-smoke seemed to have dulled all the lights before his eyes, and he fell from his chair in a fainting-fit.

He needed nothing but rest; that, however, was imperative. Mr. Athel brought him to London, and the family went down at once to their house in Surrey. Wilfrid was an only son and an only child. His father had been a widower for nearly ten years; for the last three his house had been directed by a widowed sister, Mrs. Rossall, who had twin girls. Mr. Athel found it no particular hardship to get away from town and pursue his work at The Firs, a delightful house in the midst of Surrey's fairest scenery, nor would Mrs. Rossall allow that the surrender of high season cost her any effort. This lady had just completed her thirty-second year; her girls were in their tenth. She was comely and knew it, but a constitutional indolence had preserved her from becoming a woman of fashion, and had nurtured in her a reflective mood, which, if it led to no marked originality of thought, at all events contributed to an appearance of culture. At the time of her husband's death she was at the point where graceful inactivity so often degenerates into slovenliness. Mrs. Rossall's homekeeping tendencies and the growing childhood of her twins tended to persuade her that her youth was gone; even the new spring fashions stirred her to but languid interest, and her music, in which she had some attainments, was all but laid aside. With widowhood began a new phase of her life. Her mourning was unaffected; it led her to pietism; she spent her days in religious observance, and her nights in the study of the gravest literature. She would have entered the Roman Church but for her brother's interposition. The end of this third year of discipline was bringing about another change, perhaps less obvious to herself than to those who marked her course with interest, as several people did. Her reading became less ascetic, she passed to George Herbert and the 'Christian Year,' and by way of the decoration of altars proceeded to thought for her personal adornment. A certain journal

of society which she had long ago abandoned began to show itself occasionally in her rooms, though only as yet by oversight left to view. She spoke with her brother on the subject of certain invitations, long neglected, and did not seem displeased when he went beyond her own motion to propose the issuing of cards for a definite evening. Then came Wilfrid's break-down. There was really no need, said Mr. Athel, that she should transfer herself immediately to the country, just when everybody was well settled in town. But Mrs. Rossall preferred to go; she was not sure that the juncture had not some connection with her own spiritual life. And she maintained, on the whole, a seemly cheerfulness.

Mr. Athel was an Egyptologist of some distinction. Though not in person or manner suggestive of romantic antecedents, he had yet come by this taste in a way which bordered on romance. Travelling in Southern Europe at about the age which Wilfrid had now reached, he had the good fortune to rescue from drowning an Italian gentleman then on a tour in Greece. The Italian had a fair daughter, who was travelling with him, and her, after an acquaintance of a few weeks, Athel demanded by way of recompense. Her father was an enthusiastic student of Egyptian antiquities; the Englishman plied at one and the same time his wooing and the study of hieroglyphics, with marked success in both directions. The Mr. Athel who at that time represented parental authority, or at all events claimed filial deference, was anything but pleased with the step his son had taken; he was a highly respectable dealer in grain, and, after the manner of highly respectable men of commerce, would have had his eldest son espouse some countrywoman yet more respectable. It was his opinion that the lad had been entrapped by an adventurous foreigner. Philip Athel, who had a will of his own, wedded his Italian maiden, brought her to England, and fought down prejudices. A year or two later he was at work in Egypt, where he remained for some twelve months; his studies progressed. Subsequently he published certain papers which were recognised as valuable. Wilfrid found the amusement of his childhood in his father's pursuit; he began to decipher hieratic not much later than he learned to read English. Scarabs were his sacred playthings, and by the time of his going to school he was able to write letters home in a demotic which would not perhaps have satisfied Champollion or Brugsch, but yet was sufficiently marvellous to his schoolfellows and gratifying to his father.

For the rest, Philip Athel was a typical English gentleman. He enjoyed out-of-door sports as keenly as he did the pursuit of his study; he had scarcely known a day's illness in his life, owing, he maintained, to the wisdom with which he arranged his day. Three hours of study was, he held, as much as any prudent man would allow himself. He was always in excellent spirits, ever ready to be of service to a friend, lived with much moderation on victuals of the best quality procurable, took his autumnal holiday abroad in a gentlemanly manner. With something of theoretic radicalism in his political views, he combined a stout respect for British social institutions; affecting to be above vulgar prejudices, he was in reality much prepossessed in favour of hereditary position, and as time went on did occasionally half wish that the love he had bestowed on his Italian wife had been given to some English lady of 'good' family. He was liberal, frank, amiably autocratic in his home, apt to be peppery with inferiors who missed the line of perfect respect, candid and reasonable with equals or superiors. For his boy he reserved a store of manly affection, seldom expressing itself save in bluff fashion; his sister he patronised with much kindness, though he despised her judgment. One had now and then a feeling that his material circumstances aided greatly in making him the genial man he was, that with beef and claret of inferior quality he might not have been altogether so easy to get along with. But that again was an illustration of the English character.

We find the family assembling for breakfast at The Firs one delightful morning at the end of July. The windows of the room were thrown open, and there streamed in with the sunlight fresh and delicious odours, tonics alike of mind and body. From the Scotch firs whence the dwelling took its name came a scent which mingled with wafted breath from the remoter heather, and the creepers about the house-front, the lovely bloom and leafage skirting the lawn, contributed to the atmosphere of health and joy. It was nine o'clock. The urn was on the gleaming table, the bell was sounding. Mr. Athel stepped in straight from the lawn, fresh after his ten minutes' walk about the garden. Wilfrid Athel appeared at the same moment; he was dark-complexioned and had black, glossy hair; his cheeks were hollower than they should have been, but he had not the aspect of an invalid. Mrs. Rossall glided into the room behind him, fresh, fair, undemonstrative. Then came the twins, by name Patty and Minnie, delicate,

with promise of their mother's English style of beauty ; it was very hard to distinguish them, their uncle had honestly given up the pretence long ago, and occasionally remonstrated with his sister on the absurdity of dressing them exactly alike. The last to enter the room was the governess, Miss Emily Hood.

Mr. Athel, having pronounced a grace, mentioned that he thought of running up to town ; did anybody wish to give him a commission ? Mrs. Rossall looked thoughtful, and said she would make a note of two or three things.

'I haven't much faith in that porridge regimen, Wilf,' remarked the master of the house, as he helped himself to chicken and tongue. 'We are not Highlanders. It's dangerous to make diet too much a matter of theory. Your example is infectious ; first the twins ; now Miss Hood. Edith, do you propose to become a pervert to porridge ?'

'I have no taste for it,' replied his sister, who had become absent-minded.

'There's a certain dishonesty about it, moreover,' Mr. Athel pursued. 'Porridge should be eaten with salt. Milk *and* sugar—didn't I hear a suggestion of golden syrup, more honestly called treacle, yesterday ? These things constitute evasion, self-deception at the least. In your case, Miss Hood, the regimen is clearly fruitful of ill results.'

'Of what kind, Mr. Athel ?'

'Obviously it leads to diminution of appetite. You were in the habit of eating a satisfactory breakfast ; at present some two ounces of that farinaceous mess——'

'My dear Philip !' interposed Mrs. Rossall, still absently.

'I hold that I am within my rights,' asserted her brother. 'If Miss Hood goes down into Yorkshire in a state of emaciation——' Wilfrid and the twins showed amusement.

'To begin with,' pursued Mr. Athel, 'I hold that sweet food the first thing in the morning is a mistake ; the appetite is checked in an artificial way, and impaired. Even coffee——'

'You would recommend a return to flagons of ale ?' suggested Wilfrid.

'I am not sure that it wasn't better, dietetically.'

Mrs. Rossall had taken an egg, but, after fruitlessly chipping at the shell throughout this conversation, put down her spoon and appeared to abandon the effort to commence her meal. Presently she broke silence, speaking with some diffidence.

'I really think I will go to town with you, Philip,' she said. 'I want some things you can't very well get me, and then I ought to go and see the Redwings. I might persuade Beatrice to come to us for a day or two.'

'Do so by all means. You're quite sure,' he added with a smile, 'that I couldn't save you the trouble of the journey? I have no objection to visiting the Redwings.'

'I think it will be better if I go myself,' replied Mrs. Rossall, with a far-off look. 'I might call on one or two other people.'

Having decided this point, she found herself able to crack the egg. The anticipation of her day in London made her quite gay throughout the meal.

The carriage was at the door by ten o'clock, to drive to Dealing, the nearest station, some four miles away. The twins had gone upstairs with Miss Hood to their lessons, and Wilfrid was sauntering about the hall. His father paused by him on the way to the carriage.

'What do you propose to do with yourself, Wilf?' he asked.

'Ride, I think.'

'Do. Go over to Hilstead and lunch there. Capital lunch they give you at the inn; the last time I was there they cooked me one of the best chops I ever ate. Oberon wants exercise; make a day of it.'

'Very well.'

'You're not looking quite so well, I'm afraid,' remarked his father, with genuine solicitude in his tone. 'Haven't been reading, have you?'

'No.'

'No imprudences, mind. I must stop that porridge regimen; it doesn't suit you. Ready, Edith?' he shouted heartily at the foot of the stairs.

Mrs. Rossall came down, buttoning her gloves.

'If I were you, Wilf,' she said, 'I'd go off somewhere for the day. The twins will only worry you.'

Wilfrid laughed.

'I am going to eat unexampled chops at the "Waggoner" in Hilstead,' he replied.

'That's right. Good-bye, my dear boy. I wish you'd get fatter.'

'Pooh, I'm all right.'

The landau rolled away. Wilfrid still loitered in the hall, a

singular look of doubt on his face. In a room above one of the twins was having a music lesson; a certain finger-exercise was being drummed with persistent endeavour at accuracy.

'How can she bear that morning after morning?' the young man murmured to himself.

He took his straw hat and went round to the stables. Oberon was being groomed. Wilfrid patted the horse's sleek neck, and talked a little with the man. At length he made up his mind to go and prepare for riding; Oberon would be ready for him in a few minutes.

In the porch Patty ran to meet him.

'Truant!' Wilfrid exclaimed. 'Have I caught you in the act of escape?'

'I was going to look for you,' said the child, putting her arm through his and swinging upon him. 'We want to know if you'll be back for lunch.'

'Who wants to know?'

'I and Minnie and Miss Hood.'

'O, you are Patty, then, are you?'

This was an old form of joke. The child shook her dark curls with a half-annoyed gesture, but still swung on her cousin as he moved into the house. Wilfrid passed his arm about her playfully.

'Can't you make up your mind, Wilf?' she asked.

'O yes, my mind is quite made up,' he replied, with a laugh.

'And won't you tell me?'

'Tell you? Ah, about lunch. No, I shall not be back.'

'You won't? O, I am sorry.'

'Why are you sorry, indistinguishable little maiden?' he asked, drawing out one of her curls between his fingers, and letting it spring back again into its circling beauty.

'We thought it would be so nice, we four at lunch.'

'I am warned to avoid you. The tone of conversation would try my weak head; I am not capable yet of intellectual effort.'

The little girl looked at him with puzzled eyes.

'Well, it can't be helped,' she said. 'I must go back to my lessons.'

She ran off, and Wilfrid went up to his dressing-room. When he came down, Oberon was pawing the gravel before the door. He mounted and rode away.

His spirits, which at first seemed to suffer some depression, took vigour once more from the air of the downs. He put Oberon

at a leap or two, then let the breeze sing in his ears as he was borne at a gallop over the summer land, golden with sunlight. In spite of his still worn look, health was manifest in the upright vigour of his form, and in his eyes gleamed the untroubled joy of existence. Hope just now was strong within him, a hope defined and pointing to an end attainable; he knew that henceforth the many bounding and voiceful streams of his life would unite in one strong flow onward to a region of orient glory which shone before him as the bourne hitherto but dimly imagined. On, Oberon, on! No speed that would not lag behind the fore-flight of a heart's desire. Let the stretch of green-shadowing woodland sweep by like a dream; let the fair, sweet meadow-sides smile for a moment and vanish; let the dark hill-summits rise and sink. It is the time of youth and hope, of boundless faith in the world's promises, of breathless pursuit.

Hilstead was gained long before lunch could be thought of. Wilfrid rode on, and circled back towards the hostelry famous for chops about the hour of noon. He put up his horse, and strayed about the village till his meal was ready; after he had eaten it he smoked a cigar among hollyhocks and sunflowers. Then impatience possessed him. He looked at his watch several times, annoyed to find that so little of the day was spent. When he at last set forth again, it was to ride at walking pace in the direction of home. He reached a junction of roads, and waited there for several minutes, unable to decide upon his course. He ended by throwing the reins on Oberon's neck.

'Go which way you will,' he said aloud.

Oberon paced forward to the homeward route.

'So be it. On, then! An hour will bring us to The Firs.'

The house was all but reached, when Wilfrid caught a glimpse of a straw hat moving into a heath-clad hollow a hundred yards from the road. He pressed on. At the gate stood a gardener.

'James,' he cried, leaping down, 'take the horse to the stable, will you?'

And, instead of going up to the house, he walked back in the direction he had come till he reached the hollow in which the straw hat had disappeared. Miss Hood sat on the ground, reading. She was about to rise, but Wilfrid begged her not to move, and threw himself into a reclining posture.

'I saw you as I rode past,' he said, in a friendly way. 'I suppose the twins are straying?'

'They are at Greenhaws,' was the reply. 'Mrs. Winter called for them immediately after lunch. She will bring them back early in the evening.'

'Ah!'

He plucked sprigs of heather. Miss Hood turned to her book.

'I've had a magnificent ride,' Wilfrid began again. 'Surely there is no country in England so glorious as this. Don't you enjoy it?'

'Very much.'

'I have never seen the Yorkshire moors. The scenery, of course, is of a much wilder kind?'

'I have not seen them myself,' said the governess.

'I thought you might have taken your holidays sometimes in that direction.'

'No. We used to go to a seaside place in Lincolnshire called Cleethorpes. I suppose you never heard of it?'

'I think not.'

Wilfrid continued to pluck heather, and let his eyes catch a glimpse of her face now and then. Miss Hood was a year younger than himself, and had well outgrown girlishness. She was of very slight build, looked indeed rather frail; but her face, though lacking colour, had the firmness of health. It was very broad at the forehead, and tapered down into narrowness; the eyes seemed set at an unusual distance from each other, though the nose was thin and of perfect form, its profile making but a slight angle away from the line of the brows. Her lips were large, but finely curved; the chin was prominent, the throat long. She had warm brown hair.

Few would at first sight have called her face beautiful, but none could deny the beauty of her hands. Ungloved at present, they lay on the open pages of the book, unsurpassable for delicate loveliness. When he did not venture to look higher, Wilfrid let his eyes feed on the turn of the wrist, the faint blue lines and sinuous muscles, the pencilling about the finger-joints, the delicate white and pink nails.

Miss Hood was habitually silent when in the company of others than the children. When she replied to a question it was without timidity, but in few, well-chosen words. Yet her manner did not lack cheerfulness; she impressed no one as being unhappy, and alone with the twins she was often gay enough. She

was self-possessed, and had the manners of a lady, though in her position this was rather to be observed in what she refrained from doing than in what she did. Wilfrid had, on first meeting her, remarked to himself that it must imply a certain force of individuality to vary so distinctly from the commonplace even under the disadvantage of complete self-suppression; he had now come to understand better the way in which that individuality betrayed itself.

'Shall you go to Cleethorpes this year?' was his next question.

'I think not. I shall most likely pass the holidays at home.'

'And study electricity?'

In a former conversation she had surprised him by some unexpected knowledge of the principles of electricity, and explained the acquirement by telling him that this subject was her father's favourite study. Wilfrid put the question now with a smile.

'Yes, very likely,' she replied, smiling also, but faintly. 'It gives my father pleasure when I do so.'

'You have not a keen interest in the subject yourself?'

'I try to have.'

Her voice was of singular quality; if she raised it the effect was not agreeable, owing possibly to its lack of strength, but in low tones, such as she employed at present, it fell on the ear with a peculiar sweetness, a natural melody in its modulation.

'The way in which you speak of your father interests me,' said Wilfrid, leaning his chin upon his hand, and gazing at her freely. 'You seem so united with him in sympathy.'

She did not turn her eyes to him, but her face gathered brightness.

'In sympathy, yes,' she replied, speaking now with more readiness. 'Our tastes often differ, but we are always at one in feeling. We have been companions ever since I can remember.'

'Is your mother living?'

'Yes.'

Something in the tone of the brief affirmative kept Wilfrid from further questioning.

'I wonder,' he said, 'what you think of the relations existing between myself and my father. We are excellent friends, don't you think? Strange—one doesn't think much about such things till some occasion brings them forward. Whether there is deep

sympathy between us, I couldn't say. Certainly there are many subjects on which I should not dream of speaking to him unless necessity arose; partly, I suppose, that is male reserve, and partly English reserve. If novels are to be trusted, French parents and children speak together with much more freedom; on the whole that must be better.'

She made no remark.

'My father,' he continued, 'is eminently a man of sense; if I reflect on my boyhood, I see how admirable his treatment of me has always been. I fancy I must have been at one time rather hard to manage; I know I was very passionate and stubbornly self-willed. Yet he neither let me have my own way nor angered me by his opposition. In fact he made me respect him. Now that we stand on equal terms, I dare say he has something of the same feeling towards myself. And so it comes that we are excellent friends.'

She listened with a scarcely perceptible smile.

'Perhaps this seems to you a curiously dispassionate way of treating such a subject,' Wilfrid added, with a laugh. 'It illustrates what I meant in saying I doubted whether there was deep sympathy between us. Your own feeling for your father is clearly one of devotedness. You would think no sacrifice of your own wishes too great if he asked it of you.'

'I cannot imagine any sacrifice, which my father could ask, that I should refuse.'

She spoke with some difficulty, as if she wished to escape the subject.

'Perhaps that is a virtue that your sex helps to explain,' said Wilfrid, musingly.

'You do not know,' he added, when a bee had hummed between them for half a minute, 'how constant my regret is that my mother did not live till I was old enough to make a friend of her. You know that she was an Italian? There was a sympathy taken out of my life. I believe I have more of the Italian nature than the English, and I know my mother's presence would be priceless to me now that I could talk with her. What unsatisfactory creatures we are as children, so imperfect, so deficient! It is worse with boys than with girls. Compare, for instance, the twins with boys of ten. What coarse, awkward, unruly lumps of boisterousness youngsters mostly are at that age! I dislike boys, and more than ever when I remember myself at that stage,

What an insensible, ungrateful, brainless, and heartless brat I was!’

‘You must be wrong in one respect,’ she returned, watching a large butterfly. ‘You could not have been brainless.’

‘Oh, the foundation of tolerable wits was there, no doubt; but it is just that undeveloped state that irritates me. Suppose I were now ten years old, and that glorious butterfly before me; should I not leap at it and stick a pin through it—young savage? Precisely what a Hottentot boy would do, except that he would be free from the apish folly of pretending a scientific interest, not really existing. I rejoice to have lived out of my boyhood; I would not go through it again for anything short of a thousand years of subsequent maturity.’

She just glanced at him, a light of laughter in her eyes. She was abandoning herself to the pleasure of hearing him speak.

‘That picture of my mother,’ he pursued, dropping his voice again, ‘does not do her justice. Even at twelve years old—(she died when I was twelve)—I could not help seeing and knowing how beautiful she was. I have thought of her of late more than I ever did; sometimes I suffer a passion of grief that one so beautiful and lovable has gone and left a mere dumb picture. I suppose even my memory of her will grow fainter and fainter, founded as it is on imperfect understanding, dim appreciation. She used to read Italian to me—first the Italian, then the English—and I thought it, as often as not, a bore to have to listen to her! Thank Heaven, I have the book she used, and can now go over the pieces, and try to recall her voice.’

The butterfly was gone, but the bee still hummed about them. The hot afternoon air was unstirred by any breeze.

‘How glad I am,’ Wilfrid exclaimed when he had brooded for a few moments, ‘that I happened to see you as I rode past! I should have wandered restlessly about the house in vain, seeking for some one to talk to. And you listen so patiently. It is pleasant to be here and talk so freely of things I have always had to keep in my own mind. Look, do look at that bastion of cloud over the sycamore! What glorious gradation of tints! What a snowy crown!’

‘That is a pretty spray,’ he added, holding to her one that he had plucked.

She looked at it; then, as he still held it out, took it from him. The exquisite fingers touched his own redder and coarser ones.

'Have you friends in Dunfield?' he asked.

'Friends?'

'Any real friend, I mean—any girl who gives you real companionship?'

'Scarcely that.'

'How shall you spend your time when you are not deep in electrics? What do you mean to read these holidays?'

'Chiefly German, I think. I have only just begun to read it.'

'And I can't read it at all. Now and then I make a shot at the meaning of a note in a German edition of some classical author, every time fretting at my ignorance. But there is so endlessly much to do, and a day is so short.'

'Isn't it hateful,' he broke forth, 'this enforced idleness of mine? To think that weeks and weeks go by and I remain just where I was, when the loss of an hour used to seem to me an irreparable misfortune. I have such an appetite for knowledge, surely the unhappiest gift a man can be endowed with; it leads to nothing but frustration. Perhaps the appetite weakens as one grows in years; perhaps the sphere of one's keener interests contracts; I hope it may be so. At times I cannot work—I mean, I could not—for a sense of the vastness of the field before me. I should like you to see my rooms at Balliol. Shelves have long since refused to take another volume; floor, tables, chairs, every spot is heaped. And there they lie; hosts I have scarcely looked into, many I shall never have time to take up to the end of my days.'

'You have the satisfaction of being able to give your whole time to study.'

'There is precisely the source of dissatisfaction! My whole time, and that wholly insufficient. I have a friend, a man I envy intensely; he has taken up the subject of Celtic literature; gives himself to it with single-heartedness, cares for nothing that does not connect itself therewith; will pursue it throughout his life; will know more of it than any man living. My despair is the universality of my interests. I can think of no branch of study to which I could not surrender myself with enthusiasm; of course I shall never master one. My subject is the history of humanity; I would know everything that man has done or thought or felt. I cannot separate lines of study. Philology is a passion with me, but how shall I part the history of speech from the history of thought? The etymology of any single word will hold me for

hours, to follow it up I must traverse centuries of human culture. They tell me I have a faculty for philosophy, in the narrow sense of the word; alas! that narrow sense implies an exhaustive knowledge of speculation in the past and of every result of science born in our own time. Think of the sunny spaces in the world's history, in each of which one could linger for ever. Athens at her fairest, Rome at her grandest, the glorious savagery of Merovingian courts, the kingdom of Frederick II., the Moors in Spain, the magic of Renaissance Italy—to become a citizen of any one age means a lifetime of endeavour. It is easy to fill one's head with names and years, but that only sharpens my hunger. Then there is the world of art; I would know every subtlest melody of verse in every tongue, enjoy with perfectly instructed taste every form that man has carved or painted. I fear to enter museums and galleries; I am distracted by the numberless desires that seize upon me, depressed by the hopelessness of satisfying them. I cannot even enjoy music from the mere feeling that I do not enjoy it enough, that I have not had time to study it, that I shall never get at its secret. . . . And when is one to live? I cannot lose myself in other men's activity and enjoyments. I must have a life of my own, outside the walls of a library. It would be easy to give up all ambition of knowledge, to forget all the joy and sorrow that has been and passed into nothingness; to know only the eternity of a present hour. Might one not learn more in one instant of unreflecting happiness than by toiling on to a mummied age, only to know in the end the despair of never having lived?

He again raised his eyes to her face. It was fixed in a cold, absent gaze; her lips hardened into severity, the pose of her head impressive, noble. Athel regarded her for several moments; she was revealing to him more of her inner self than he had yet divined.

'What are your thoughts?' he asked quietly.

She smiled, recovering her wonted passiveness.

'Have you not often much the same troubles?'

'They are only for the mind which is strong enough to meet and overcome them,' she replied.

'But look, my mind has given way already! I am imbecile. For ever I shall be on the point of a break-down, and each successive one will bring me nearer to some final catastrophe—perhaps the lunatic asylum—who knows?'

sympathy between us, I couldn't say. Certainly there are many subjects on which I should not dream of speaking to him unless necessity arose; partly, I suppose, that is male reserve, and partly English reserve. If novels are to be trusted, French parents and children speak together with much more freedom; on the whole that must be better.'

She made no remark.

'My father,' he continued, 'is eminently a man of sense; if I reflect on my boyhood, I see how admirable his treatment of me has always been. I fancy I must have been at one time rather hard to manage; I know I was very passionate and stubbornly self-willed. Yet he neither let me have my own way nor angered me by his opposition. In fact he made me respect him. Now that we stand on equal terms, I dare say he has something of the same feeling towards myself. And so it comes that we are excellent friends.'

She listened with a scarcely perceptible smile.

'Perhaps this seems to you a curiously dispassionate way of treating such a subject,' Wilfrid added, with a laugh. 'It illustrates what I meant in saying I doubted whether there was deep sympathy between us. Your own feeling for your father is clearly one of devotedness. You would think no sacrifice of your own wishes too great if he asked it of you.'

'I cannot imagine any sacrifice, which my father could ask, that I should refuse.'

She spoke with some difficulty, as if she wished to escape the subject.

'Perhaps that is a virtue that your sex helps to explain,' said Wilfrid, musingly.

'You do not know,' he added, when a bee had hummed between them for half a minute, 'how constant my regret is that my mother did not live till I was old enough to make a friend of her. You know that she was an Italian? There was a sympathy taken out of my life. I believe I have more of the Italian nature than the English, and I know my mother's presence would be priceless to me now that I could talk with her. What unsatisfactory creatures we are as children, so imperfect, so deficient! It is worse with boys than with girls. Compare, for instance, the twins with boys of ten. What coarse, awkward, unruly lumps of boisterousness youngsters mostly are at that age! I dislike boys, and more than ever when I remember myself at that stage.'

What an insensible, ungrateful, brainless, and heartless brat I was !'

'You must be wrong in one respect,' she returned, watching a large butterfly. 'You could not have been brainless.'

'Oh, the foundation of tolerable wits was there, no doubt ; but it is just that undeveloped state that irritates me. Suppose I were now ten years old, and that glorious butterfly before me ; should I not leap at it and stick a pin through it—young savage ? Precisely what a Hottentot boy would do, except that he would be free from the apish folly of pretending a scientific interest, not really existing. I rejoice to have lived out of my boyhood ; I would not go through it again for anything short of a thousand years of subsequent maturity.'

She just glanced at him, a light of laughter in her eyes. She was abandoning herself to the pleasure of hearing him speak.

'That picture of my mother,' he pursued, dropping his voice again, 'does not do her justice. Even at twelve years old—(she died when I was twelve)—I could not help seeing and knowing how beautiful she was. I have thought of her of late more than I ever did ; sometimes I suffer a passion of grief that one so beautiful and lovable has gone and left a mere dumb picture. I suppose even my memory of her will grow fainter and fainter, founded as it is on imperfect understanding, dim appreciation. She used to read Italian to me—first the Italian, then the English—and I thought it, as often as not, a bore to have to listen to her ! Thank Heaven, I have the book she used, and can now go over the pieces, and try to recall her voice.'

The butterfly was gone, but the bee still hummed about them. The hot afternoon air was unstirred by any breeze.

'How glad I am,' Wilfrid exclaimed when he had brooded for a few moments, 'that I happened to see you as I rode past ! I should have wandered restlessly about the house in vain, seeking for some one to talk to. And you listen so patiently. It is pleasant to be here and talk so freely of things I have always had to keep in my own mind. Look, do look at that bastion of cloud over the sycamore ! What glorious gradation of tints ! What a snowy crown !'

'That is a pretty spray,' he added, holding to her one that he had plucked.

She looked at it ; then, as he still held it out, took it from him. The exquisite fingers touched his own redder and coarser ones.

'Have you friends in Dunfield?' he asked.

'Friends?'

'Any real friend, I mean—any girl who gives you real companionship?'

'Scarcely that.'

'How shall you spend your time when you are not deep in electrics? What do you mean to read these holidays?'

'Chiefly German, I think. I have only just begun to read it.'

'And I can't read it at all. Now and then I make a shot at the meaning of a note in a German edition of some classical author, every time fretting at my ignorance. But there is so endlessly much to do, and a day is so short.'

'Isn't it hateful,' he broke forth, 'this enforced idleness of mine? To think that weeks and weeks go by and I remain just where I was, when the loss of an hour used to seem to me an irreparable misfortune. I have such an appetite for knowledge, surely the unhappiest gift a man can be endowed with; it leads to nothing but frustration. Perhaps the appetite weakens as one grows in years; perhaps the sphere of one's keener interests contracts; I hope it may be so. At times I cannot work—I mean, I could not—for a sense of the vastness of the field before me. I should like you to see my rooms at Balliol. Shelves have long since refused to take another volume; floor, tables, chairs, every spot is heaped. And there they lie; hosts I have scarcely looked into, many I shall never have time to take up to the end of my days.'

'You have the satisfaction of being able to give your whole time to study.'

'There is precisely the source of dissatisfaction! My whole time, and that wholly insufficient. I have a friend, a man I envy intensely; he has taken up the subject of Celtic literature; gives himself to it with single-heartedness, cares for nothing that does not connect itself therewith; will pursue it throughout his life; will know more of it than any man living. My despair is the universality of my interests. I can think of no branch of study to which I could not surrender myself with enthusiasm; of course I shall never master one. My subject is the history of humanity; I would know everything that man has done or thought or felt. I cannot separate lines of study. Philology is a passion with me, but how shall I part the history of speech from the history of thought? The etymology of any single word will hold me for

hours, to follow it up I must traverse centuries of human culture. They tell me I have a faculty for philosophy, in the narrow sense of the word; alas! that narrow sense implies an exhaustive knowledge of speculation in the past and of every result of science born in our own time. Think of the sunny spaces in the world's history, in each of which one could linger for ever. Athens at her fairest, Rome at her grandest, the glorious savagery of Merovingian courts, the kingdom of Frederick II., the Moors in Spain, the magic of Renaissance Italy—to become a citizen of any one age means a lifetime of endeavour. It is easy to fill one's head with names and years, but that only sharpens my hunger. Then there is the world of art; I would know every subtlest melody of verse in every tongue, enjoy with perfectly instructed taste every form that man has carved or painted. I fear to enter museums and galleries; I am distracted by the numberless desires that seize upon me, depressed by the hopelessness of satisfying them. I cannot even enjoy music from the mere feeling that I do not enjoy it enough, that I have not had time to study it, that I shall never get at its secret. . . . And when is one to live? I cannot lose myself in other men's activity and enjoyments. I must have a life of my own, outside the walls of a library. It would be easy to give up all ambition of knowledge, to forget all the joy and sorrow that has been and passed into nothingness; to know only the eternity of a present hour. Might one not learn more in one instant of unreflecting happiness than by toiling on to a mummied age, only to know in the end the despair of never having lived?

He again raised his eyes to her face. It was fixed in a cold, absent gaze; her lips hardened into severity, the pose of her head impressive, noble. Athel regarded her for several moments; she was revealing to him more of her inner self than he had yet divined.

'What are your thoughts?' he asked quietly.

She smiled, recovering her wonted passiveness.

'Have you not often much the same troubles?'

'They are only for the mind which is strong enough to meet and overcome them,' she replied.

'But look, my mind has given way already! I am imbecile. For ever I shall be on the point of a break-down, and each successive one will bring me nearer to some final catastrophe—perhaps the lunatic asylum—who knows?'

'I should think,' she said gravely, 'that you suggested a truth. Very likely your mind will contract its range and cease to aim at the impossible.'

'But tell me, have you not yourself already attained that wisdom? Why should you make pretences of feebleness which does not mark you? You have a mind as active as my own; I know that perfectly well. What is your secret of contentment? Won't you help me in this miserable plight?'

'No, Mr. Athel, I have none but very ordinary powers of mind, and perhaps it is my recognition of that which keeps me contented. There is indeed one principle of guidance which I have worked out for myself——'

'Ah! And that?'

'It will not enlighten you, for it is only the choice of a natural and easy course, seeing that difficult ones are closed. The literature of learning is out of my reach, so I limit myself to the literature of beauty, and in this I try to keep to the best.'

'You are right, you are right! To know the masterpieces of literature, pure literature, poetry in its widest sense; that is the wise choice. Think; we feed ourselves with the second-hand wisdom of paltry philosophisers and critics, and Shakespeare waits outside the door with the bread of life. From Homer—— Alas! you do not read Greek?'

She shook her head.

'And you work at German! In heaven's name change your language forthwith! Why should you not know Greek? You *must* know Greek! I will give you books, I will advise you, show you the essentials to begin with. There are still a few days before you go into Yorkshire; you can work during the holidays on lines I shall set you; you can write and tell me your——'

He paused, for her face had lost its smile, and wore again that coldly respectful look which she seldom put off save in her privacy with the children. For the last quarter of an hour he had marked in her quite another aspect; the secret meanings of her face had half uttered themselves in eye and lip. His last words seemed to recall her to the world of fact. She made a slight movement and closed the book on her lap.

'Greek is more than I can undertake, Mr. Athel,' she said in a quietly decided tone. 'I must be content with translations.'

'Translations! You would not say that so calmly if you knew

what you were renouncing. Everything, everything in literature, I would give up to save my Greek. You will learn it, I know you will; some day I shall hear you read the hexameters as beautifully as you read English poetry to the girls. Will you not begin if I beg you to?’

The elbow on which he rested moved a few inches nearer to her. He saw the pearly shadows waver upon her throat, and her lips tremble into rigidity.

‘My time in the holidays will be very limited,’ she said. ‘I have undertaken to give some help to a friend who is preparing to become a teacher, and’—she tried to smile—‘I don’t think I must do more work whilst at home than is really necessary.’

‘No, that is true,’ Wilfrid assented unwillingly. ‘Never mind, there is plenty of time. Greek will be overcome, you will see. When we are all back in town and the days are dull, then I shall succeed in persuading you.’

She looked about her as if with thought of quitting her place. Her companion was drawn into himself; he stroked mechanically with his finger-tips the fronds of bracken near him.

‘I suppose I shall go up again in October,’ he began. ‘I wish there were no necessity for it.’

‘But surely it is your one desire?’ the other replied in genuine surprise.

‘Not to return to Oxford. A few months ago it would have been, but this crisis in my life has changed me. I don’t think I shall adapt myself again to those conditions. I want to work in a freer way. I had a positive zeal even for examinations; now that seems tame—well, boyish. I believe I have outgrown that stage; I feel a reluctance to go back to school. I suppose I must take my degree, and so on, but it will all be against the grain.’

‘Your feeling will most likely alter when you have thoroughly recovered your health.’

‘No, I don’t think it will. Practically my health is all right. You don’t,’ he added with a smile, ‘regard me as an irresponsible person, whose feeble remarks are to be received with kind allowance?’

‘No, I did not mean that.’

He gazed at her, and his face showed a growing trouble.

‘You do not take too seriously what I said just now about the weakness of my mind? It would be horrible if you thought I had worked myself into a state of amiable imbecility, and was

incapable henceforth of acting, thinking, or speaking with a sound intellect. Tell me, say in plain words that is not your way of interpreting me.'

He had become very much in earnest. Raising himself to a position in which he rested on one hand, he looked straight into her face.

'Why don't you reply? Why don't you speak?'

'Because, Mr. Athel, it is surely needless to say that I have no such thought.'

'No, it is not needless; and even now you speak in a way which troubles me. Do not look away from me. What has my aunt told you about me?'

She turned her face to him. Her self-command was so complete that not a throb of her leaping heart betrayed itself in vein or muscle. She even met his eyes with a placid gaze which he felt as a new aspect of her countenance.

'Mrs. Rossall has never spoken to me of your health,' she said.

'But my father's jokes; he has a way of humorous exaggeration. You of course understand that; you don't take seriously all he says?'

'I think I can distinguish between jest and earnest.'

'For all that, you speak of the recovery of my health as if I were still far from the wholly rational stand-point. So far from my being mentally unsound, this rest has been a growing-time with me. Before, I did nothing but heap my memory with knowledge of books; now I have had leisure to gather knowledge of a deeper kind. I was a one-sided academical monster; it needed this new sense to make me human. The old college life is no longer my ideal; I doubt if it will be possible. At any rate I shall hurry over the rest of my course as speedily as may be, that I may begin really to live. You must credit what I am saying; I want you to give me distinct assurance that you do so. If I have the least doubt, it will trouble my mind in earnest.'

Miss Hood rose to her feet in that graceful effortless way of which girls have the secret.

'You attribute a meaning to my words that I never thought of,' she said, again in the distant respectful manner.

Wilfrid also rose.

'And you give me credit for understanding myself, for being as much master of my mind as I am of my actions?'

'Surely I do, Mr. Athel.'

'You are going to the house? It is nearly five o'clock; your conscience tells you that a civilised being must drink tea. I think I shall walk over to Greenhaws; I may as well save Mrs. Winter the trouble of bringing back the children.'

He hesitated before moving away.

'How little that cloud has changed its form! I should like to stay here and watch it till sunset. In a week I suppose I shall be looking at some such cloud over Mont Blanc. And you, in Dunfield.'

'No, there we have only mill-smoke.'

She smiled, and passed from the hollow to the road.

CHAPTER II.

BEATRICE REDWING.

MIDWAY in breakfast next morning, at a moment when Mrs. Rossall was describing certain originalities of drawing-room decoration observed on the previous day at a house in town, the half-open door admitted a young lady who had time to glance round the assembled family before her presence was observed. In appearance she was very interesting. The tints of her fine complexion were warmed by exercise in the morning air, and her dark eyes brightened by pleasurable excitement; she carried her hat in her hand, and seemed to have been walking bare-headed, for there were signs of wind-play in her abundant black hair. But neither face nor attire suggested rusticity; the former was handsome, spirited, with a hint of uncommon things in its changeful radiance; the latter was the result of perfect taste choosing at will among the season's costumes. At her throat were fastened two blossoms of wild rose, with the dew still on them, and the hand which held her lace-trimmed sunshade carried also a spray of meadow-sweet.

Mr. Athel, looking up from the end of the table, was the first to perceive her.

'*Guardami ben: ben son, ben son Beatrice!*' he exclaimed, rising and moving from his place. 'But how in the world has she got here?'

'Beatrice!' cried Mrs. Rossall, following the general direction

of eyes. 'Here already! But you surely haven't come from town this morning.'

'But indeed I have,' was the reply, in a joyous voice, whose full, rich quality took the ear captive. 'Will you let me sit down just as I am? Patty, here's a rose for you, and, Minnie, another for you.' She took them from her dress. 'How do you do, Mr. Wilfrid?'

The governess was mentioned to her by name; Beatrice looked at her steadfastly for a moment.

'But how have you got here?' inquired Mrs. Rossall. 'You must have left London at an unheard-of hour; and how have you come from Dealing?'

'Clearly she has walked,' said Mr. Athel. 'Don't you see the spoils of her progress?'

'Oh yes, I have walked,' replied the girl. 'I suppose I'm in a dreadful state; towards the end I almost ran. I was so afraid lest I should miss breakfast, and you can't imagine how hungry I am. Is that oatmeal porridge you are eating, Mr. Wilfrid? Oh, do let me have some; how delicious it will be!'

'Nonsense, Beatrice,' interposed Mrs. Rossall. 'Let Mr. Athel give you some of that pâté, or will you have——'

'I've been a vegetarian for a month,' was the reply.

'You don't mean it?'

'Most strictly. No—eggs are not permitted; only the feeble school allows them. You can't think how much better I have been in body and mind since I adopted the new diet.'

'But whatever train did you start by?' pressed Mrs. Rossall.

'Half-past six. I never can sleep these short summer nights. I was up about five o'clock, and just as I was going to read, I saw the railway time-table. I looked for the first train and determined to come by it. I wrote a short note to let mother know what had become of me, then in a minute or two I got my things packed, and last of all stole out of the house to find a cab. Luckily, a policeman was just passing the door; he found one for me in no time. Not a soul was up, so I dragged the trunk out on to the landing, and then made the cabman creep upstairs like a burglar to fetch it. Of course he thought I was running away; he enjoyed the joke wonderfully; you should have seen his smile when I paid him at the station. Perhaps you'll let them fetch my luggage before lunch?'

'But won't your mother be alarmed?' asked Mrs. Rossall.

'Why should she? She knows I am very capable of taking care of myself. I wouldn't have missed this walk for anything. I only lost my way once, and then, luckily, a farmer came driving along; he told me I had half a mile more. I trebled his distance, which made it about right.'

'It's a good four miles from the station,' remarked Mr. Athel.

'Is it? If I hadn't been so hungry I shouldn't have minded as much again. You're not angry with me, Mrs. Rossall, for coming before I was expected?'

A curious note of irresponsible childishness came out now and then in her talk, as in this last question; it was the more noticeable for the air of maturity and self-possession which on the whole characterised her. She continued to talk with much vivacity, making at the same time a hearty meal. Her place at the table was between Wilfrid and Patty; on the opposite side sat Miss Hood and Minnie. As often as her eyes fell upon the governess's face, they rested there for a moment, searchingly, as if with endeavour to recall some memory.

'Who is responsible for your vegetarianism?' Wilfrid asked. 'Is Mr. Cresset preaching the doctrine?'

'No, Mr. Cresset is not preaching the doctrine,' was the reply, in a tone which evidently contained reference to previous dissensions.

'Surely there is nothing offensive in the suggestion?' remarked the young man mildly.

'Yes, there is something offensive. Your references to Mr. Cresset are always offensive.'

'You do me injustice. Aunt, I take you to witness, didn't I praise ungrudgingly a sermon of his we heard last Christmas?'

'I remember quite well,' said Beatrice; 'you regarded it as extraordinary that anything good could come from that source. Mr. Athel, I take you to witness, wasn't that his tone?'

'Patty,' interposed Mrs. Rossall, 'do change your place and sit between those two; they never can be next to each other without quarrelling.'

Breakfast drew out to unusual length. Miss Redwing was full of the season's news, and Mrs. Rossall's reviving interest in such vanities scarcely affected concealment. Mr. Athel, too, though he supported a jesting tone, clearly enjoyed listening to the girl's vivacious comments on the world which amuses itself. Wilfrid talked less than usual.

He and his father strolled together into the garden an hour later,

and found Beatrice reclining in a hammock which had recently been suspended in a convenient spot. She had one hand beneath her head, the other held a large fan, with which she warded off stray flakes of sunlight falling between the leaves.

'Isn't this exquisite?' she cried. 'Let no one hint to me of stirring before lunch-time. I am going to enjoy absolute laziness.'

'I thought you would have preferred a gallop over the downs,' said Mr. Athel.

'Oh, we'll have that this afternoon; you may talk of it now, and I shall relish it in anticipation. Or, better still, sit down and tell us old stories about Egypt, and let us forget the age we live in.'

'What is amiss with the age?' inquired Mr. Athel, who stood smoking a cigar and was in his wonted state of satisfaction with himself and the universe.

'Everything is amiss. If you had been with me yesterday in a street I was visiting, not a quarter of a mile from home—— But I'm going to forget all that now. How deliciously warm it is here in the shade! I must have a hammock in our garden at Cowes.'

'When do you go back?' Mr. Athel asked.

'In about a fortnight. It has done mother no end of good; don't you think she looks remarkably well, Mrs. Rossall? I'm afraid she finds it a little dull though.'

When his father had returned to the house, Wilfrid sat on the grass and rested his head against the arm of the low garden chair in which Mrs. Rossall was reclining. The sound of a grass-cutter alone mingled with the light rustling of the trees. It was one of those perfect summer mornings when the sun's rays, though streaming from a cloudless sky, are tempered by a gentle haze in the upper regions of the air, when the zenith has a tinge of violet and on the horizon broods a reddish mist. From this part of the garden only a glimpse of the house was visible; an upper window with white curtains, cool, peaceful. All else on every side was verdure and bloom.

'Is it possible,' Beatrice asked, when there had been silence for a few moments, 'that I can have met Miss Hood anywhere before to-day? Her face is strangely familiar to me.'

'She has never been in London before she came to us,' said Mrs. Rossall.

'But you have relatives in Dunfield, I think?' remarked Wilfrid.

'To be sure,' said his aunt; 'she comes from Dunfield, in Yorkshire. Do you think you can have met her there?'

'Ah, that explains it,' Beatrice cried eagerly. 'I knew I had seen her, and I know now where it was. She gave lessons to my uncle's children. I saw her when I was staying there the last time, three—no, four years ago. I can't recall her by her name, but her face, oh, I remember it as clearly as possible.'

'What a memory you have, Beatrice!' said Mrs. Rossall.

'I never forget a face that strikes me.'

'In what way did Miss Hood's face strike you?' Wilfrid asked, as if in idle curiosity, and with some of the banter which always marked his tone to Beatrice.

'You would like some deep, metaphysical reason, but I am not advanced enough for that. I don't suppose I thought much about her at the time, but the face has stayed in my mind. But how old is she?'

'Two-and-twenty,' said Mrs. Rossall, smiling.

'A year older than myself; my impression was that she was more than that. I think I only saw her once; she was with us at lunch one day. We spoke of her shyness, I remember; she scarcely said a word all the time.'

'Yes, she is very shy,' assented Mrs. Rossall.

'That's a mistake, I think, aunt,' said Wilfrid; 'shyness is quite a different thing from reticence.'

'Reticent, then,' conceded the lady, with a smile to Beatrice. 'At all events she is very quiet and agreeable and well-bred. It is such a good thing to have a governess who really seems well-bred; it does make it so much easier to treat her with consideration.'

'Do the children like her?' Beatrice asked.

'Very much indeed. And it's wonderful how she controls them; they are scatter-brained little creatures.'

'Will she go abroad with you?'

'Oh, no, I don't think that necessary.'

Wilfrid presently left the two to their gossip. The conversation naturally turned to him.

'How is his health?' Beatrice asked.

'He seems quite recovered. I don't think there was ever anything to occasion much alarm, but his father got frightened. I expect we shall bring him back from Switzerland as well as ever he was.'

'What ever has he done with himself the last two months?' mused the girl.

'Well, it has been rather hard to keep him occupied away from books. He has been riding a good deal, and smoking a good deal.'

'And talking a good deal?'

'Well, yes, Wilf is fond of talking,' admitted Mrs. Rossall, 'but I don't think he's anything like as positive as he was. He does now and then admit that other people may have an opinion which is worth entertaining. Celia Dawlish was with us a fortnight ago; she declared him vastly improved.'

'She told him so?'

'No, that was in private to me.'

'But I think Celia and he always got on well together,' said Beatrice in an idly meditative tone, moving the edge of her fan backwards and forwards a few inches above her face.

A few minutes later, after a silence, she said,

'Do you know what I am thinking?'

'What?' asked Mrs. Rossall, with an air of interest.

'That if I were to close my eyes and keep quiet I should very soon be fast asleep.'

The other laughed at the unexpected reply.

'Then why not do so, dear? It's warm enough; you couldn't take any harm.'

'I suppose the walk has tired me.'

'But if you had no sleep last night? How is it you can't sleep, I wonder? Is it the same when you are at Cowes?'

'No, only in London. Something troubles me; I feel that I have neglected duties. I hear voices, as distinct as yours now, reproving me for my idle, frivolous life.'

'Nonsense! I am sure you are neither idle nor frivolous. Do doze off, if you can, dear, I'll go and get something to read.'

'You won't be angry with me?' the girl asked, in the tone of an affectionate weary child.

'I shall if you use ceremony with me.'

Beatrice sighed, folded her hands upon the fan, and closed her lids. When Mrs. Rossall returned from the house with a magazine and a light shawl, the occupant of the hammock was already sound asleep. She threw the shawl with womanly skill and gentleness over the shapely body. When she had resumed her seat, she caught a glimpse of Wilfrid at a little distance; her beckoned summons brought him near.

'Look,' she whispered, pointing to the hammock. 'When did you see a prettier picture?'

The young man gazed with a free smile, the expression of critical appreciativeness. The girl's beauty stirred in him no mood but that. She slept with complete calm of feature; the half-lights that came through the foliage made an exquisite pallor on her face, contrasting with the dark masses of her hair. Her bosom rose and fell in the softest sighing; her pure throat was like marble, and her just parted lips seemed to need a protector from the bees.

While she sleeps, let us learn a little more of her history. Some five-and-twenty years previously, Alfred Redwing was a lecturer on Greek and Latin at a small college in the north of England, making shift to live on a beggarly stipend. Handsome, pleasing, not quite thirty, he was well received in such semblance of society as his town offered, and, in spite of his defects as a suitor, he won for his wife a certain Miss Baxendale, the daughter of a well-to-do manufacturer. She brought him at once a few hundreds a year, and he pursued his college work in improved spirits. His wife had two brothers; one had early gone to America, the other was thriving as a man of business in the town of Dunfield. With Laurence Baxendale, who dated his very occasional letters from various parts of the United States, the family might be said to have parted for good; before leaving England he had got on ill-terms with his father and brother, and it was only a persistent affection for his sister that caused him to give any sign of himself year after year. When this sister had been Mrs. Redwing for about two years, she one day received an intimation from solicitors that Laurence was dead and had left her the whole of a very considerable fortune, the product, mainly, of dealings in lumber. Mr. and Mrs. Redwing in fact found themselves possessed of nearly fourteen thousand a year, proceeding from most orderly investments. This would naturally involve a change in their mode of life. In the first place they paid a visit to America; then they settled in London, where, about the same time, their only child, Beatrice, was born. A month after the child's coming into the world, the father withdrew from it,—into a private lunatic asylum. He had not been himself from the day when he heard of the fortune that had come to him; such an access of blessedness was not provided for in the constitution of his mind. Probably few men of his imaginative temperament and hard antecedents

could have borne the change without some little unsettling of mental balance; we are framed to endure any amount of ill, but have to take our chance in the improbable event of vast joy befalling us. Poor Redwing conceived a suspicion that his wife desired to murder him; one night as she was following him into their bedroom, he suddenly turned round, caught hold of her with violence, and flung her to the ground, demanding the knife which he protested he had seen gleam in her hand. It was no longer safe to live with him; he was put under restraint, and never again knew freedom. In less than a year he died, a moping maniac.

Mrs. Redwing was an invalid thenceforth; probably it was only the existence of her child that saved her life. An affection of the heart in course of time declared itself, but, though her existence was believed to hang on a thread, she lived on and on, lived to see Beatrice grow to womanhood. She kept a small house in London, but spent the greater part of the year at home or foreign health-resorts. Her relatives had supposed that she would return to her own country, but Mrs. Redwing had tastes which lacked gratification in a provincial manufacturing town. Without having achieved much positive culture, she had received from her husband an impulse towards the development of certain higher possibilities in her nature, and she liked the society of mentally active people. The state of her health alone withheld her from a second marriage; she was not a very patient invalid, and suffered keenly in the sense of missing the happiness which life had offered her. In the matter of her daughter's education she exercised much care. Doctrinal religion had a strong hold upon her, and it was her solicitude that Beatrice should walk from the first in the ways of Anglican salvation. She dreaded the 'spirit of the age.' With a better judgment in pure literature than falls to the lot of most women—or men either—she yet banished from her abode, wherever it might be, anything that remotely savoured of intellectual emancipation; her æsthetic leanings she deemed the great temptation of her life, for she frankly owned to her friends that many things powerfully attracted her, which her conscience bade her shun as dangerous. Her generosity made her a shining light in the world which busies itself in the dispensing or receiving of ecclesiastical charity. The clerical element was very strong in the circle that surrounded her. At the same time her worldly tastes did not go altogether ungratified. She was very

fond of music, and her unlimited powers in the provision of first-rate musical entertainment brought to her house acquaintances of a kind that would not otherwise have been found there. The theatre she tabooed, regarding this severity as an acceptable sacrifice, and not troubling to reflect what share her ill-health had in rendering it a fairly easy one. In brief, she was a woman of a genial nature, whose inconsistencies were largely due to her inability to outgrow early conditions.

Beatrice inherited her mother's mental restrictions, but was endowed with a subtlety of nature, which, aided by her circumstances, made her yet more a being of inconsistencies and contradictions. In religion it was not enough for her to conform; zeal drove her into the extremest forms of ritualistic observance. Nor did care for her personal salvation suffice; the logic of a compassionate nature led her on to various forms of missionary activity; she haunted vile localities, ministering alike to soul and body. At the same time she relished keenly the delights of the masquerading sphere, where her wealth and her beauty made her doubly welcome. From praying by the bedside of a costermonger's wife, she would speed away to shine among the brightest in phantasmagoric drawing-rooms; her mother could seldom accompany her, but there was always some one ready to chaperon Beatrice Redwing. Once in the world from which thought is banished, she seemed as thoughtless as any. Her spiritual convictions put no veto even upon dancing. Yet her mood at such times was not the entire self-abandonment of the girl who is born but to waltz. In spite of the sanction of custom, she could not wholly suppress her virginal instincts, and, however unconsciously, something in her nature held itself aloof. She led a life of indecision. Combining in herself such contradictory elements, she was unable to make close friendships. Her intimacy with Mrs. Rossall, which dated from her late childhood, was not the perfect accord which may subsist between women of very different characters, yet here she gave and received more sympathy than elsewhere. It was her frequent saying that she came to Mrs. Rossall's house when she wanted to rest. Here she could be herself, could pass without interval from pietistic argument to chatter about her neighbours, could indulge in impulses of confession as with no one else, could put off the strain of existence which was the result of her conflicting impulses. But it was only during a portion of the year that she could have Mrs. Rossall's

society; at other times, though no one suspected it, she suffered much from loneliness. With her mother she was in accord on the subjects of religion and music, but even natural affection, blending with these sympathies, could not bring about complete unity; in her home there was the same lack that she experienced in the outer world. For all her versatility, she was not in appearance emotional; no one seemed less likely to be overcome by passion. Her enthusiasms fell short of the last note of sincerity. Perhaps it was on this account that she produced no strong impression, in spite of her beauty. Her personality suffered on acquaintance from defect of charm. Was it a half-consciousness of this that led her now and then into the curious affectation of childishness already remarked? Did she feel unable to rely for pleasing upon those genuine possessions which for some reason could never advantageously display themselves?

For more than an hour she slept. At her waking, she found Minnie standing by her side.

'Are your lessons over?' she asked, passing at once into full consciousness, without sign of having slept.

The child replied that they were.

'Where is Miss Hood?'

'In the summer-house.'

Beatrice rose, and they walked towards the summer-house together. It was in a corner of the garden, hidden among acacias and laurels, a circular hut in the ordinary rustic style. Patty and the governess were seated within. Beatrice entered, and took a seat with them.

'Is your memory as good as my own, Miss Hood?' she said pleasantly. 'Do you remember our meeting four years ago?'

The other regarded her with quiet surprise, and said she had no recollection of the meeting.

'Not at Mr. Baxendale's, my uncle's, one day that you lunched with us when I was staying there?'

Miss Hood had wholly forgotten the circumstance. It served, however, for the commencement of a conversation, which went on till Mrs. Rossall, finding the hammock deserted, was guided by the sound of voices to where the two girls and the children sat.

In the afternoon there was a setting forth into the country. Mr. Athel drove his sister and the children; Wilfrid and Beatrice accompanied them on horseback. The course to be pursued having

been determined, the riders were not at pains to keep the carriage always within sight.

'Why did Miss Hood decline to come?' Mr. Athel inquired, shortly after they had started.

'She gave no reason,' Mrs. Rossall replied. 'It was her choice to stay at home.'

'Of course you asked her in a proper way?'

'Why, Philip, of course I did.'

'Miss Hood never alters her mind,' remarked Patty.

'Never!' exclaimed the other twin with decision.

'An admirable characteristic,' commented their uncle, 'provided her decision is right to begin with.'

Beatrice had just led off at a gallop; Wilfrid necessarily followed her. When the pace slackened they began to talk of indifferent things. On the crest of a hill, whence the carriage could be seen far away on the white road, the girl reined in, and, turning to her companion, asked abruptly—

'What is your opinion of Miss Hood?'

'Why do you ask such a question?'

'Because I should like to know. She interests me, and you must have had opportunities enough lately of studying her character?'

'Why does she interest you?'

'I can't say. I thought you might help me to discover the reason. You have often said that you like women of strongly marked character.'

'How do you conclude that she is one?'

'I feel it; we were talking together before lunch. I don't think I like her; I don't think she has principles.'

Wilfrid laughed.

'Principles! The word is vague. You mean, no doubt, that she doesn't seem to have commonplace prejudices.'

'That's just what I wanted you to say.'

She let her horse move on. The young man followed, his eyes gazing absently before him, a smile fixed upon his lips.

Beatrice looked over her shoulder.

'Does she read the same kind of books that you do?'

'Unfortunately I read no books at all.'

She paused again, to let him get to her side.

'What a pity it can't continue!'

'What?'

'Your inability to read.'

'That is the kindest remark I have heard for a long time!' exclaimed Wilfrid, with a good-natured laugh.

'Very likely it is, though you don't mean it. When you read, you only poison your mind. It is your reading that has made you what you are, without faith, without feeling. You dissect everything, you calculate motives cynically, you have learnt to despise everyone who believes what you refuse to, you make your own intellect the centre of the world. You are dangerous.'

'What a character! To whom am I dangerous?'

'To anyone whom it pleases you to tempt, in whom you find the beginnings of disbelief.'

'In brief, I have no principles?'

'Of course you have none.'

'In other words, I am selfish?'

'Intensely so.'

It was hard to discover whether she were in earnest. Wilfrid examined her for a moment, and concluded that she must be. Her eyes were gleaming with no mock seriousness, and there was even a slight quiver about her lips. In all their exchanges of banter he had never known her look and speak quite as she did now. As he regarded her, there came a flush to her cheek. She turned her head away and rode on.

'And what moves you to visit me with this castigation at present, Miss Redwing?' he asked, still maintaining his jesting tone.

'I don't know,' she answered carelessly. 'I felt all at once able to say what I thought.'

'Then you do really think all this?'

'Assuredly I do.'

He kept silence a little.

'And you can't see,' he began, rather more seriously, 'that you are deplorably lacking in the charity which surely should be among *your* principles?'

'There are some things to which charity must not be extended.'

'Let us say, then, discretion, insight.' He spoke yet more earnestly. 'You judge me, and, in truth, you know as little of me as anyone could. The attitude of your mind prevents you from understanding me in the least; it prevents you from understanding any human being. You are consumed with prejudice, and prejudice of the narrowest, most hopeless kind. Am I too severe?'

'Not more so than you have often been. Many a time you have told me how you despised me.'

He was silent, then spoke impulsively.

'Well, perhaps the word is not too strong; though it is not your very self that I despise, but the ignorance and bigotry which possess you. It is a pity; I believe you might be a woman of quite a different kind.'

'Of pronounced character?'

'Precisely. You are neither one thing nor another. You have told me what you think of me; shall I be equally frank and speak as if you were a college friend? For at all events we *are* friends.'

'I am not sure of that.'

'Oh, but I am; and we shall be friends none the worse for ingenuousness on both sides. Look at the position in which you stand. One moment you are a woman of the world, the next you run frantic with religious zeal, another turn and you are almost an artist, at your piano; when you are tired of all these you become, or try to become, a sort of *ingénue*. In the name of consistency, be one thing or another. You are quite mistaken in thinking that I despise religious enthusiasm in itself. Become a veritable Beatrice, and I will venerate you infinitely. Give up everything to work in London slums, and you shall have my warmest admiration. But you are not sincere.'

'I am sincere!' she broke in, with more passion than he had ever imagined her capable of uttering.

'I cannot call it sincerity. It is impossible that you should be sincere; you live in the latter end of the nineteenth century; the conditions of your birth and education forbid sincerity of this kind.'

'I am sincere,' she repeated, but in a low voice, without looking at him.

'On the other hand,' he proceeded, 'surrender yourself entirely to the life of society, and I will still respect you. You are a beautiful woman; you might be inexpressibly charming. Frankly recognise your capabilities, and cultivate your charm. Make a study of your loveliness; make it your end to be a queen in drawing-rooms.'

'You insult me.'

'I can't see that I do. There is nothing contemptible in such an aim; nothing is contemptible that is thorough. Or you have the third course. Pursue music with seriousness. Become a real

artist; a public singer, let us say. No amateur nonsense; recognise that you have a superb voice, and that by dint of labour you may attain artistic excellence. You talk of getting up concerts in low parts of London, of humanising ruffians by the influence of music. Pshaw! humanise humanity at large by devotion to an artistic ideal; the other aim is paltry, imbecile, charlatan.'

He tried to see her face; she rode on, holding it averted.

'Follow any one of these courses, and you will make of yourself a true woman. By trying to be a bit of everything you become insignificant. Napoleon the Great was a curse to mankind, but one thinks more of him than of Napoleon the Little, who wasn't quite sure whether to be a curse or a blessing. There is a self in every one of us; the end of our life is to discern it, bring it out, make it actual. You don't yet know your own self; you have not the courage to look into your heart and mind; you keep over your eyes the bandage of dogmas in which you only half believe. Your insincerity blights the natural qualities of your intellect. You have so long tried to persuade yourself of the evil of every way of thinking save ecclesiastical dogmatism, that you cannot judge fairly even those to whom you are most friendly. Cannot you see that the world has outgrown the possibility of one universal religion? For good or for evil, each of us must find a religion in himself, and you have no right whatever to condemn before you have understood.'

'You cannot say that you have any religion,' she said, facing him. He saw to his astonishment that there had been tears in her eyes.

'You cannot say that I have none. The radical fault of your uninstructed way of looking at things is that you imagine mankind and the world to be matters of such simple explanation. You learn by heart a few maxims, half a dozen phrases, and there is your key to every mystery. That is the child's state of mind. You have never studied, you have never thought. Your self-confidence is ludicrous; you and such as you do not hesitate to judge offhand men who have spent a long life in the passionate pursuit of wisdom. You have no reverence. It is the fault you attribute to me, but wrongly; if you had ever brought an open mind to our conversations, you would have understood that my reverence even for your ideal is not a whit less than your own; it is only that I see it in another light. You say that I have no religion: what if I have not? Are one's final conclusions to be achieved in a year or two

of early manhood? I have my inner voices, and I try to understand them. Often enough they are ambiguous, contradictory; I live in hope that their bidding will become clearer. I search for meanings, try to understand myself, strive after knowledge.'

'You might as well have been born a pagan. One voice has spoken; its bidding is the sufficient and only guide.'

'Say rather that so it seems to you. Your inheritance of conviction is not mine; your modes of reasoning and my own have nothing in common. We inhabit different worlds.'

Beatrice let her eyes turn slowly to his face. The smile with which he met her found no reflection on her countenance; her look was that of one who realises a fatality.

'Shall we join them?' she asked in a moment, nodding towards the far-off carriage which was about to hide itself among trees.

Wilfrid mused instead of answering. She began to ride on.

'Stay one minute,' he said. 'I have been anything but courteous in my way of speaking to you, but it was better to put off idle forms, was it not?'

'Yes; I shall know henceforth what you think of me?'

'Not from this one conversation, if you mean that.'

'Well, it does not matter.'

'Perhaps not. Difference of opinion has fortunately little to do with old-standing kindness.'

'I am not sure that you are right, at all events when it has expressed itself in words of contempt.'

It was not resentment that her voice conveyed, but something which Wilfrid found it harder to bear. Her drooped eyelids and subdued tone indicated a humble pride, which the protest of her beauty made pathetic.

'We will never speak of such things again,' he said, gently. 'Let me have your forgiveness. When we join them down there, they will laugh at us and say we have been quarrelling as usual; in future I think we mustn't quarrel, we are both of us getting too old for the amusement. When you sing to us to-night, I shall remember how foolish I was even to pretend contempt.'

'You will be thinking,' she said, 'that I am a mere amateur.'

'If I do, I shall be an ungrateful wretch—and an insensible one, to boot.'

She rode down the hill without replying.

(*To be continued.*)

EVOLUTION.

EVERYBODY nowadays talks about evolution. Like electricity, the cholera germ, woman's rights, the great mining boom, and the Eastern Question, it is 'in the air.' It pervades society everywhere with its subtle essence; it infects small-talk with its familiar catchwords and its slang phrases; it even permeates that last stronghold of rampant Philistinism, the third leader in the penny papers. Everybody believes he knows all about it, and discusses it as glibly in his everyday conversation as he discusses the points of racehorses he has never seen, the charms of peeresses he has never spoken to, and the demerits of authors he has never read. Everybody is aware, in a dim and nebulous semi-conscious fashion, that it was all invented by the late Mr. Darwin, and reduced to a system by Mr. Herbert Spencer, don't you know, and a lot more of those scientific fellows. It is generally understood in the best-informed circles that evolutionism consists for the most part in a belief about nature at large essentially similar to that applied by Topsy to her own origin and early history. It is conceived, in short, that most things 'grewed.' Especially is it known that in the opinion of the evolutionists as a body we are all of us ultimately descended from men with tails, who were the final offspring and improved edition of the common gorilla. That, very briefly put, is the popular conception of the various points in the great modern evolutionary programme.

It is scarcely necessary to inform the intelligent reader, who of course differs fundamentally from that inferior class of human beings known to all of us in our own minds as 'other people,' that almost every point in the catalogue thus briefly enumerated is a popular fallacy of the wildest description. Mr. Darwin did not invent evolution any more than George Stephenson invented the steam-engine, or Mr. Edison the electric telegraph. We are not descended from men with tails, any more than we are descended from Indian elephants. There is no evidence that we have anything in particular more than the remotest fiftieth cousinship with our poor relation the West African gorilla. Science is not in search of a 'missing link'; few links are anywhere missing, and those are for the most part wholly unimportant

ones. If we found the imaginary link in question, he would not be a monkey, nor yet in any way a tailed man. And so forth generally through the whole list of popular beliefs and current fallacies as to the real meaning of evolutionary teaching. Whatever people think evolutionary is for the most part a pure parody of the evolutionist's opinion.

But a more serious error than all these pervades what we may call the drawing-room view of the evolutionist theory. So far as Society with a big initial is concerned, evolutionism first began to be talked about, and therefore known (for society does not read, it listens, or rather it overhears and catches fragmentary echoes) when Darwin published his 'Origin of Species.' That great book consisted simply of a theory as to the causes which led to the distinctions of kind between plants and animals. With evolution at large it had nothing to do; it took for granted the origin of sun, moon, and stars, planets and comets, the earth and all that in it is, the sea and the dry land, the mountains and the valleys, nay even life itself in the crude form, everything in fact, save the one point of the various types and species of living beings. Long before Darwin's book appeared evolution had been a recognised force in the moving world of science and philosophy. Kant and Laplace had worked out the development of suns and earths from white-hot star-clouds. Lyell had worked out the evolution of the earth's surface to its present highly complex geographical condition. Lamarck had worked out the descent of plants and animals from a common ancestor by slow modification. Herbert Spencer had worked out the growth of mind from its simplest beginnings to its highest outcome in human thought.

But society, like Gallio, cared nothing for all these things. The evolutionary principles had never been put into a single big book, asked for at Mudie's, and permitted to lie on the drawing-room table side by side with the last new novel and the last fat volume of scandalous court memoirs. Therefore society ignored them and knew them not; the word evolution scarcely entered at all as yet into its polite and refined dinner-table vocabulary. It recognised only the 'Darwinian theory,' 'natural selection,' 'the missing link,' and the belief that men were merely monkeys who had lost their tails, presumably by sitting upon them. To the world at large that learned Mr. Darwin had invented and patented the entire business, including descent with modification, if such notions ever occurred at all to the world-at-large's speculative intelligence.

Now evolutionism is really a thing of far deeper growth and older antecedents than this easy, superficial, drawing-room view would lead us to imagine. It is a very ancient and respectable theory indeed, and it has an immense variety of minor developments. I am not going to push it back, in the fashionable modern scientific manner, to the vague and indefinite hints in our old friend Lucretius. The great original Roman poet—the only original poet in the Latin language—did indeed hit out for himself a very good rough working sketch of a sort of nebulous and shapeless evolutionism. It was bold, it was consistent, for its time it was wonderful. But Lucretius's philosophy, like all the philosophies of the older world, was a mere speculative idea, a fancy picture of the development of things, not dependent upon observation of facts at all, but wholly evolved, like the German thinker's camel, out of its author's own pregnant inner consciousness. The Roman poet would no doubt have built an excellent superstructure if he had only possessed a little straw to make his bricks of. As it was, however, scientific brick-making being still in its infancy, he could only construct in a day a shadowy Aladdin's palace of pure fanciful Epicurean phantasms, an imaginary world of imaginary atoms, fortuitously concurring out of void chaos into an orderly universe, as though by miracle. It is not thus that systems arise which regenerate the thought of humanity; he who would build for all time must make sure first of a solid foundation, and then use sound bricks in place of the airy nothings of metaphysical speculation.

It was in the last century that the evolutionary idea really began to take form and shape in the separate conceptions of Kant, Laplace, Lamarck, and Erasmus Darwin. These were the true founders of our modern evolutionism. Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer were the Joshuas who led the chosen people into the land which more than one 'venturous Moses had already dimly descried afar off from the Pisgah top of the eighteenth century.

Kant and Laplace came first in time, as astronomy comes first in logical order. Stars and suns, and planets and satellites, necessarily precede in development plants and animals. You can have no cabbages without a world to grow them in. The science of the stars was therefore reduced to comparative system and order, while the sciences of life, and mind, and matter were still a hopeless and inextricable muddle. It was no wonder, then, that the evolution of the heavenly bodies should have been clearly appre-

hended and definitely formulated while the evolution of the earth's crust was still imperfectly understood, and the evolution of living beings was only tentatively and hypothetically hinted at in a timid whisper.

In the beginning, say the astronomical evolutionists, not only this world, but all the other worlds in the universe, existed potentially, as the poet justly remarks, in 'a haze of fluid light,' a vast nebula of enormous extent and almost inconceivable material thinness. The world arose out of a sort of primitive world-gruel. The matter of which it was composed was gas, of such an extraordinary and unimaginable gasiness that millions of cubic miles of it might easily be compressed into a common antibilious pill-box. The pill-box itself, in fact, is the net result of a prolonged secular condensation of myriads of such enormous cubes of this primæval matter. Slowly setting around common centres, however, in anticipation of Sir Isaac Newton's gravitative theories, the fluid haze gradually collected into suns and stars, whose light and heat is presumably due to the clashing together of their component atoms as they fall perpetually towards the central mass. Just as in a burning candle the impact of the oxygen atoms in the air against the carbon and hydrogen atoms in the melted and rarefied wax or tallow produces the light and heat of the flame, so in nebula or sun the impact of the various gravitating atoms one against the other produces the light and heat by whose aid we are enabled to see and know those distant bodies. The universe, according to this now fashionable nebular theory, began as a single vast ocean of matter of immense tenuity, spread all alike over all space as far as nowhere, and comparatively little different within itself when looked at side by side with its own final historical outcome. In Mr. Spencer's perspicuous phrase, evolution in this aspect is a change from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, from the incoherent to the coherent, and from the indefinite to the definite condition. Difficult words at first to apprehend, no doubt, and therefore to many people, as to Mr. Matthew Arnold, very repellent, but full of meaning, lucidity, and suggestiveness, if only we once take the trouble fairly and squarely to understand them.

Every sun and every star thus formed is for ever gathering in the hem of its outer robe upon itself, for ever radiating off its light and heat into surrounding space, and for ever growing denser and colder as it sets slowly towards its centre of gravity. Our own sun and solar system may be taken as good typical working

examples of how the stars thus constantly shrink into smaller and ever smaller dimensions around their own fixed centre. Naturally, we know more about our own solar system than about any other in our own universe, and it also possesses for us a greater practical and personal interest than any outside portion of the galaxy. Nobody can pretend to be profoundly immersed in the internal affairs of Sirius or of Alpha Centauri. A fiery revolution in the belt of Orion would affect us less than a passing finger-ache in a certain single terrestrial baby of our own household. Therefore I shall not apologise in any way for leaving the remainder of the sidereal universe to its unknown fate, and concentrating my attention mainly on the affairs of that solitary little, out-of-the-way second-rate system, whereof we form an inappreciable portion. The matter which now composes the sun and its attendant bodies (the satellites included) was once spread out, according to Laplace, to at least the furthest orbit of the outermost planet—that is to say, so far as our present knowledge goes, the planet Neptune. Of course, when it was expanded to that immense distance, it must have been very thin indeed, thinner than our clumsy human senses can even conceive of. An American would say, too thin: but I put Americans out of court at once as mere irreverent scoffers. From the orbit of Neptune, or something outside it, the faint and cloud-like mass which bore within it Cæsar and his fortunes, not to mention the remainder of the earth and the solar system, began slowly to converge and gather itself in, growing denser and denser but smaller and smaller as it gradually neared its existing dimensions. How long a time it took to do it is for our present purpose relatively unimportant: the cruel physicists will only let us have a beggarly hundred million years or so for the process, while the grasping and extravagant evolutionary geologists beg with tears for at least double or even ten times that limited period. But at any rate it has taken a good long while, and, as far as most of us are personally concerned, the difference of one or two hundred millions, if it comes to that, is not really at all an appreciable one.

As it condensed and lessened towards its central core, revolving rapidly on its great axis, the solar mist left behind at irregular intervals concentric rings or belts of cloud-like matter, cast off from its equator; which belts, once more undergoing a similar evolution on their own account, have hardened round their private centres of gravity into Jupiter or Saturn, the Earth or Venus. Round these again, minor belts or rings have sometimes

formed, as in Saturn's girdle of petty satellites; or subsidiary planets, thrown out into space, have circled round their own primaries, as the moon does around this sublunary world of ours. Meanwhile, the main central mass of all, retreating ever inward as it dropped behind it these occasional little reminders of its temporary stoppages, formed at last the sun itself, the main luminary of our entire system. Now, I won't deny that this primitive Kantian and Laplacian evolutionism, this nebular theory of such exquisite concinnity, here reduced to its simplest terms and most elementary dimensions, has received many hard knocks from later astronomers, and has been a good deal bowled over, both on mathematical and astronomical grounds, by recent investigators of nebulae and meteors. Observations on comets and on the sun's surface have lately shown that it contains in all likelihood a very considerable fanciful admixture. It isn't more than half true; and even the half now totters in places. Still, as a vehicle of popular exposition the crude nebular hypothesis in its rawest form serves a great deal better than the truth, so far as yet known, on the good old Greek principle of the half being often more than the whole. The great point which it impresses on the mind is the cardinal idea of the sun and planets, with their attendant satellites, not as turned out like manufactured articles, ready made, at measured intervals, in a vast and deliberate celestial Orrery, but as due to the slow and gradual working of natural laws, in accordance with which each has assumed by force of circumstances its existing place, weight, orbit, and motion.

The grand conception of a gradual becoming, instead of a sudden making, which Kant and Laplace thus applied to the component bodies of the universe at large, was further applied by Lyell and his school to the outer crust of this one particular petty planet of ours. While the astronomers went in for the evolution of suns, stars, and worlds, Lyell and his geological brethren went in for the evolution of the earth's surface. As theirs was stellar, so his was mundane. If the world began by being a red-hot mass of planetary matter in a high state of internal excitement, boiling and dancing with the heat of its emotions, it gradually cooled down with age and experience, for growing old is growing cold, as every one of us in time, alas, discovers. As it passed from its fiery and volcanic youth to its staid and soberer middle age, a solid crust began to form in filmy fashion upon its cooling surface. The aqueous vapour that had floated at first as steam around its

heated mass condensed with time into a wide ocean over the now hardened shell. Gradually this ocean shifted its bulk into two or three main bodies that sank into hollows of the viscid crust, the precursors of Atlantic, Pacific, and the Indian Seas. Wrinklings of the crust, produced by the cooling and consequent contraction, gave rise at first to baby mountain ranges, and afterwards to the earliest rough drafts of the still very vague and sketchy continents. The world grew daily more complex and more diverse; it progressed, in accordance with the Spencerian law, from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, and so forth, as aforesaid, with delightful regularity.

At last, by long and graduated changes, seas and lands, peninsulas and islands, lakes and rivers, hills and mountains, were wrought out by internal or external energies on the crust thus generally fashioned. Evaporation from the oceans gave rise to clouds and rain and hailstorms; the water that fell upon the mountain tops cut out the valleys and river basins; rills gathered into brooks, brooks into streams, streams into primæval Niles, and Amazons, and Mississippis. Volcanic forces uplifted here an Alpine chain, or depressed there a deep-sea hollow. Sediment washed from the hills and plains, or formed from countless skeletons of marine creatures, gathered on the sinking bed of the ocean as soft ooze, or crumbling sand, or thick mud, or gravel and conglomerate. Now upheaved into an elevated table-land, now slowly carved again by rain and rill into valley and watershed, and now worn down once more into the mere degraded stump of a plateau, the crust underwent innumerable changes, but almost all of them exactly the same in kind, and mostly in degree, as those we still see at work imperceptibly in the world around us. Rain washing down the soil; weather crumbling the solid rock; waves dashing at the foot of the cliffs; rivers forming deltas at their barred mouths; shingle gathering on the low spits; floods sweeping before them the countryside; ice grinding ceaselessly at the mountain top; peat filling up the shallow lake—these are the chief factors which have gone to make the physical world as we now actually know it. Land and sea, coast and contour, hill and valley, dale and gorge, earth-sculpture generally—all are due to the ceaseless interaction of these separately small and unnoticeable causes, aided or retarded by the slow effects of elevation or depression from the earth's shrinkage towards its own centre. Geology, in short, has shown us that the world is what it is, not by virtue

of a single sudden creative act, nor by virtue of successive terrible and recurrent cataclysms, but by virtue of the slow continuous action of causes still always equally operative.

Evolution in geology leads up naturally to evolution in the science of life. If the world itself grew, why not also the animals and plants that inhabit it? Already in the eager active eighteenth century this obvious idea had struck in the germ a large number of zoologists and botanists, and in the hands of Lamarck and Erasmus Darwin it took form as a distinct and elaborate system of organic evolution. Buffon had been the first to hint at the truth; but Buffon was an eminently respectable nobleman in the dubious days of the tottering monarchy, and he did not care personally for the Bastille, viewed as a place of permanent residence. In Louis Quinze's France, indeed, as things then went, a man who offended the orthodoxy of the Sorbonne was prone to find himself shortly ensconced in free quarters, and kept there for the term of his natural existence without expense to his heirs or executors. So Buffon did not venture to say outright that he thought all animals and plants were descended one from the other with slight modifications; that would have been wicked, and the Sorbonne would have proved its wickedness to him in a most conclusive fashion by promptly getting him imprisoned or silenced. It is so easy to confute your opponent when you are a hundred strong and he is one weak unit. Buffon merely said, therefore, that if we didn't know the contrary to be the case by sure warrant, we might easily have concluded (so fallible is our reason) that animals always varied slightly, and that such variations, indefinitely accumulated, would suffice to account for almost any amount of ultimate difference. A donkey might thus have grown into a horse, and a bird might have developed from a primitive lizard. Only we know it was quite otherwise! A quiet hint from Buffon was as good as a declaration from many less knowing or suggestive people. All over Europe, the wise took Buffon's hint for what he meant it; and the unwise blandly passed it by as a mere passing little foolish vagary of that great ironical writer and thinker.

Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of his grandson, was no fool; on the contrary, he was the most far-sighted man of his day in England; he saw at once what Buffon was driving at; and he worked out 'Mr. Buffon's' half-concealed hint to all its natural and legitimate conclusions. The great Count was always plain Mr. Buffon to his English contemporary. Life, said Erasmus

Darwin, nearly a century since, began in very minute marine forms, which gradually acquired fresh powers and larger bodies, so as imperceptibly to transform themselves into different creatures. Man, he remarked, anticipating his descendant, takes rabbits or pigeons, and alters them almost to his own fancy, by immensely changing their shapes and colours. If man can make a pouter or a fantail out of the common sort, if he can produce a piebald lop-ear from the brown wild rabbit, if he can transform Dorkings into Black Spanish, why cannot nature, with longer time to work in, and endless lives to try with, produce all the varieties of vertebrate animals out of one single common ancestor? It was a bold idea of the Lichfield doctor—bold, at least, for the times he lived in—when Sam Johnson was held a mighty sage, and physical speculation was regarded askance as having in it a dangerous touch of the devil. But the Darwins were always a bold folk, and had the courage of their opinions more than most men. So even in Lichfield, cathedral city as it was, and in the politely somnolent eighteenth century, Erasmus Darwin ventured to point out the probability that quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, and men were all mere divergent descendants of a single similar original form, and even that ‘one and the same kind of living filament is and has been the cause of organic life.’

The eighteenth century laughed, of course. It always laughed at all reformers. It said Dr. Darwin was very clever, but really a most eccentric man. His ‘Temple of Nature,’ now, and his ‘Botanic Garden,’ were vastly fine and charming poems—those sweet lines, you know, about poor Eliza!—but his zoological theories were built of course upon a most absurd and uncertain foundation. In prose, no sensible person could ever take the doctor seriously. A freak of genius—nothing more; a mere desire to seem clever and singular. But what a Nemesis the whirligig of time has brought around with it! By a strange irony of fate, those admired verses are now almost entirely forgotten; poor Eliza has survived only as our awful example of artificial pathos; and the zoological heresies at which the eighteenth century shrugged its fat shoulders and dimpled the corners of its ample mouth, have grown to be the chief cornerstone of all accepted modern zoological science.

In the first year of the present century Lamarck followed Erasmus Darwin’s lead with an open avowal that in his belief all animals and plants were really descended from one or a few common ancestors. He held that organisms were just as much

the result of law, not of miraculous interposition, as suns and worlds and all the natural phenomena around us generally. He saw that what naturalists call a species differs from what naturalists call a variety, merely in the way of being a little more distinctly marked, a little less like its nearest congeners elsewhere. He recognised the perfect gradation of forms by which in many cases one species after another merges into the next on either side of it. He observed the analogy between the modifications induced by man and the modifications induced by nature. In fact, he was a thoroughgoing and convinced evolutionist, holding every salient opinion which Society still believes to have been due to the works of Charles Darwin. In one point only, a minor point to outsiders, though a point of cardinal importance to the inner brotherhood of evolutionism, he did not anticipate his more famous successor. He thought organic evolution was wholly due to the direct action of surrounding circumstances, to the intercrossing of existing forms, and above all to the actual efforts of animals themselves. In other words, he had not discovered natural selection, the cardinal idea of Charles Darwin's epoch-making book. For him, the giraffe had acquired its long neck by constant reaching up to the boughs of trees; the monkey had acquired its opposable thumb by constant grasping at the neighbouring branches; and the serpent had acquired its sinuous shape by constant wriggling through the grass of the meadows. Charles Darwin improved upon all that by his suggestive hint of survival of the fittest, and in so far, but in so far alone, he became the real father of modern biological evolutionism.

From the days of Lamarck to the day when Charles Darwin himself published his wonderful 'Origin of Species,' this idea that plants and animals might really have grown, instead of having been made all of a piece, kept brewing everywhere in the minds and brains of scientific thinkers. The notions which to the outside public were startlingly new when Darwin's book took the world by storm, were old indeed to the thinkers and workers who had long been familiar with the principle of descent with modification and the speculations of the Lichfield doctor or the Paris philosopher. Long before Darwin wrote his great work, Herbert Spencer had put forth in plain language every idea which the drawing-room biologists attributed to Darwin. The supporters of the development hypothesis, he said seven years earlier—yes, he called it the 'development hypothesis' in so many words—'can show that

modification has effected and is effecting great changes in all organisms, subject to modifying influences.' They can show, he goes on (if I may venture to condense so great a thinker), that any existing plant or animal, placed under new conditions, begins to undergo adaptive changes of form and structure; that in successive generations these changes continue, till the plant or animal acquires totally new habits; that in cultivated plants and domesticated animals changes of the sort habitually occur; that the differences thus caused, as for example in dogs, are often greater than those on which species in the wild state are founded, and that throughout all organic nature there *is* at work a modifying influence of the same sort as that which they believe to have caused the differences of species—'an influence which, to all appearance, would produce in the millions of years and under the great variety of conditions which geological records imply, any amount of change.' What is this but pure Darwinism, as the drawing-room philosopher still understands the word? And yet it was written seven years before Darwin published the 'Origin of Species.'

The fact is, one might draw up quite a long list of Darwinians before Darwin. Here are a few of them—Buffon, Lamarck, Goethe, Oken, Bates, Wallace, Lecoq, Von Baer, Robert Chambers, Matthew, and Herbert Spencer. Depend upon it, no one man ever yet of himself discovered anything. As well say that Luther made the German Reformation, that Lionardo made the Italian Renaissance, or that Robespierre made the French Revolution, as say that Charles Darwin, and Charles Darwin alone, made the evolutionary movement, even in the restricted field of life only. A thousand predecessors worked up towards him; a thousand contemporaries helped to diffuse and to confirm his various principles.

Charles Darwin added to the primitive evolutionary idea the special notion of natural selection. That is to say, he pointed out that while plants and animals vary perpetually and very indefinitely, all the varieties so produced are not equally adapted to the circumstances of the species. If the variation is a bad one, it tends to die out, because every point of disadvantage tells against the individual in the struggle for life. If the variation is a good one, it tends to persist, because every point of advantage similarly tells in the individual's favour in that ceaseless and viewless battle. It was this addition to the evolutionary concept, fortified by Darwin's powerful advocacy of the general principle of

descent with modification, that won over the whole world to the 'Darwinian theory.' Before Darwin, many men of science were evolutionists; after Darwin, all men of science became so at once, and the rest of the world is rapidly preparing to follow their leadership.

As applied to life, then, the evolutionary idea is briefly this—that plants and animals have all a natural origin from a single primitive living creature, which itself was the product of light and heat acting on the special chemical constituents of an ancient ocean. Starting from that single early form, they have gone on developing ever since, from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, assuming ever more varied shapes, till at last they have reached their present enormous variety of tree and shrub, and herb and seaweed, of beast and bird, and fish and creeping insect. Evolution throughout has been one and continuous, from nebula to sun, from gas-cloud to planet, from early jelly-speck to man or elephant. So at least evolutionists say—and of course they ought to know most about it.

But evolution, according to the evolutionists, does not even stop there. Psychology as well as biology has also its evolutionary explanation: mind is concerned as truly as matter. If the bodies of animals are evolved, their minds must be evolved likewise. Herbert Spencer and his followers have been mainly instrumental in elucidating this aspect of the case. They have shown, or they have tried to show (for I don't want to dogmatise on the subject), how mind is gradually built up from the simplest raw elements of sense and feeling; how emotions and intellect slowly arise; how the action of the environment on the organism begets a nervous system of ever greater and greater complexity, culminating at last in the brain of a Newton, a Shakespeare, or a Mendelssohn. Step by step, nerves have built themselves up out of the soft tissues as channels of communication between part and part. Sense-organs of extreme simplicity have first been formed on the outside of the body, where it comes most into contact with external nature. Use and wont have fashioned them through long ages into organs of taste and smell and touch; pigment spots, sensitive to light or shade, have grown by infinite gradations into the human eye or into the myriad facets of bee and beetle; tremulous nerve-ends, responsive sympathetically to waves of sound, have tuned themselves at last into a perfect gamut in the developed ear of men and mammals. Meanwhile corresponding percipient centres have grown up in the brain, so that the

coloured picture flashed by an external scene upon the eye is telegraphed from the sensitive mirror of the retina, through the many-stranded cable of the optic nerve, straight up to the appropriate headquarters in the thinking brain. Stage by stage the continuous process has gone on unceasingly, from the jelly-fish with its tiny black specks of eyes, through infinite steps of progression, induced by ever-widening intercourse with the outer world, to the final outcome in the senses and the emotions, the intellect and the will, of civilised man. Mind begins as a vague consciousness of touch or pressure on the part of some primitive, shapeless, soft creature; it ends as an organised and co-ordinated reflection of the entire physical and psychical universe on the part of a great cosmical philosopher.

Last of all, like diners-out at dessert, the evolutionists take to politics. Having shown us entirely to their own satisfaction the growth of suns, and systems, and worlds, and continents, and oceans, and plants, and animals, and minds, they proceed to show us the exactly analogous and parallel growth of communities, and nations, and languages, and religions, and customs, and arts, and institutions, and literatures. Man, the evolving savage, as Tylor, Lubbock, and others have proved for us, slowly putting off his brute aspect derived from his early ape-like ancestors, learned by infinitesimal degrees the use of fire, the mode of manufacturing stone hatchets and flint arrowheads, the earliest beginnings of the art of pottery. With drill or flint he became the Prometheus to his own small heap of sticks and dry leaves among the tertiary forests. By his nightly camp-fire he beat out gradually his excited gesture-language and his oral speech. He tamed the dog, the horse, the cow, the camel. He taught himself to hew small clearings in the woodland, and to plant the banana, the yam, the bread-fruit, and the coco-nut. He picked and improved the seeds of his wild cereals till he made himself from grass-like grains his barley, his oats, his wheat, his Indian corn. In time, he dug out ore from mines, and learnt the use first of gold, next of silver, then of copper, tin, bronze, and iron. Side by side with these long secular changes, he evolved the family, communal or patriarchal, polygamic or monogamous. He built the hut, the house, and the palace. He clothed or adorned himself first in skins and leaves and feathers; next in woven wool and fibre; last of all in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. He gathered into hordes, tribes, and nations; he chose himself a king, gave himself laws, and built up great empires in Egypt, Assyria, China,

and Peru. He raised him altars, Stonehenges and Karnaks. His picture-writing grew into hieroglyphs and cuneiforms, and finally emerged, by imperceptible steps, into alphabetic symbols, the raw material of the art of printing. His dug-out canoe culminates in the iron-clad and the 'Great Eastern;' his boomerang and sling-stone in the Woolwich infant; his boiling pipkin and his wheeled car in the locomotive engine; his picture-message in the telephone and the Atlantic cable. Here, where the course of evolution has really been most marvellous, its steps have been all more distinctly historical; so that nobody now doubts the true descent of Italian, French, and Spanish from provincial Latin, or the successive growth of the trireme, the 'Great Harry,' the 'Victory,' and the 'Minotaur' from the coracles or praus of prehistoric antiquity.

The grand conception of the uniform origin and development of all things, earthly or sidereal, thus summed up for us in the one word evolution, belongs by right neither to Charles Darwin nor to any other single thinker. It is the joint product of innumerable workers, all working up, though some of them unconsciously, towards a grand final unified philosophy of the cosmos. In astronomy, Kant, Laplace, and the Herschels; in geology, Hutton, Lyell, and the Geikies; in biology, Buffon, Lamarck, the Darwins, Huxley, and Spencer; in psychology, Spencer, Romanes, Sully, and Ribot; in sociology, Spencer, Tylor, Lubbock, and De Mortillet—these have been the chief evolutionary teachers and discoverers. But the use of the word evolution itself, and the establishment of the general evolutionary theory as a system of philosophy applicable to the entire universe, we owe to one man alone—Herbert Spencer. Many other minds—from Galileo and Copernicus, from Kepler and Newton, from Linnæus and Tournefort, from D'Alembert and Diderot, nay, even, in a sense, from Aristotle and Lucretius—had been piling together the vast collection of raw material from which that great and stately superstructure was to be finally edified. But the architect who placed each block in its proper niche, who planned and designed the whole elevation, who planted the building firmly on the rock and poised the coping-stone on the topmost pinnacle, was the author of the 'System of Synthetic Philosophy,' and none other. It is a strange proof of how little people know about their own ideas, that among the thousands who talk glibly every day of evolution, not ten per cent. are probably aware that both word and conception are alike due to the commanding intelligence and vast generalising power of Herbert Spencer.

CASS.

CHAPTER I.

THERE have been changes at the Hard since 1860. The boatmen have easier times and are less jovial; the steamers bluster in with an air of proprietorship, lie by and shriek shrilly, take up their cargoes of excursionists and baskets and bluster out again, with much hauling of ropes, much shouting and counter-shouting, and oaths tempered to the ears of polite pleasure parties. In the year 1860 the boatmen watched their rivals jealously and were eloquent in the language of abuse. Their rivals have multiplied; the boatman of to-day is gloomy and has no longer the spirit to rail. It is still a place of mysterious charm to the ragged, shoeless, cheerful town urchins who congregate near the water's edge. The shops do a brisk trade still in boiled beef and ham, buns and pasties, flannels and printed cottons, shell-fish, nautical instruments, and beer and stout drunk on the premises; and still, indoors and out of doors, the wholesome odours of rope and tar and seaweed pervade everything. But the shops nearest the sea have gone; after the fire in 1860 they pulled down the two old houses and built again on their sites. And Cass, who used to stand there, with her brown arms bare to the elbow, her hands on her hips, fearless as the sailors, and as ready with her laugh and jest and abuse—Cass is gone with the old houses and the old times.

Cass was the beauty of the Hard, and knew it, and enjoyed the knowledge. She enjoyed it as a prince enjoys his title and an old poet his renown; she would have scorned to let admiration flutter her. She sat on the doorstep of the shop when she was a child, and looked up into the faces of strange ladies and gentlemen who pointed her out to one another suddenly as they passed, and was unabashed when they stopped to survey her closely. She looked steadily up at them with fearless eyes and rare blushes. The fine gentlemen smiled at her; the fine ladies lifted their gowns a little and bent down to question her in simple language.

‘And what is your name, little girl?’

‘Cass Brady. What’s yourn?’ she said, and looked at her friends the boatmen to approve and applaud her coolness.

The gentlemen would laugh as they strolled on ; the ladies would murmur something gently about manners. Cass had sharp ears and a clear young voice. Her voice would follow the strangers on their way.

'Manners ! An' where's yer own ? Manners's good as yourn any day, I reckon. When I pays me penny a week I won' come your way. No fear !' And the boatmen applauded loudly.

'Give 'em as good as they brought,' said Cass.

'Trust you,' said the men admiringly.

Cass was pretty at eight years old and prettier at eighteen. Her skin was as warm a brown as that of the young Italian girls who sang in the streets in picturesque dress ; her eyes were as brown as theirs and brighter and more fearless ; her hair grew low and swept back in big waves from her brow ; her teeth were white, her lips rosy without being sensual ; her head was well poised, her figure strongly yet slenderly knit. If she laughed and talked too loudly for the public street, if her repartee was sometimes more rough than decorous, her audience was not critical on these points. The old men grinned at her benignly ; the young men liked a girl who could hold her own, cap jest with jest, turn the satire against the satirist, laugh indifferently at compliments, and whistle and hum unmoved when the chapel preacher and the temperance missionary came down to the Hard to proselytise.

The shop, the doorway of which Cass loved, was a shop that sold cooked meats, hot and cold, potatoes browned at the top, moist with gravy beneath, steaming tea and coffee, home-made cake of a rich and weighty kind, and many other delicacies—a shop which described itself vulgarly as an 'eating-house.' A hard-featured, grey-complexioned woman sat behind the counter, served her customers deliberately with no unbecoming eagerness, and served all alike without favour, meting out the exact proportion of butter to each slice of bread, the just amount of fresh mustard to each plate. Her lips were straight, and opened and shut without lending much expression to her face ; her eyes rested shrewdly but without interest on her customers and acquaintances, on Emily, her gentle niece, and on Cass, her daughter. She was a woman who had seen trouble, and her troubles had made her stolid.

Mrs. Brady's was a well-populated house ; every room had its lodger, some more than one. The lodgers were for the most part old, lonely, weather-beaten men who turned in at night and out

in the morning and made little work. They took their breakfasts, and sometimes teas and suppers, in two dark little rooms behind the shop, where the tables had oilcloth covers which could be washed down and dried on the spot, at a moment's notice, without expense. Emily, in a patient, gentle way, brought the meals; Cass came in and out and brought laughter to season the meals, and heard complimentary comments on her bright eyes, her pretty lips and complexion, and was in no way disconcerted. And when Jim Cross, the youngest lodger, with whom Cass for the last four years had been 'keeping company,' looked up sternly and disapprovingly, Cass stayed longer and laughed more gaily to prove her freedom.

Things were going wrong between Jim and Cass. Perhaps some one was making mischief secretly; perhaps the 'preachings' Jim had attended lately and his new, severe religious views made him clearer-sighted about Cass and the ungodly bent of her nature; perhaps—it is useless speculating—things were going wrong, and Cass was unconciliating and too proud to attempt to set them right. And at last they reached a crisis.

It was late in winter. The short afternoon was almost over, and the gas, just lighted in the public-house next door to the Bradys, shone out through the red curtains and made the wet street darker and colder. Cass looked out at the grey water and the moored boats and shivered, and up at the starless sky and shivered again. There was no one to talk to and nothing to look at: the Hard was deserted. Presently a sailor passed Cass, and said, 'Good night, me dear,' familiarly.

'Good night,' said Cass, friendly ever, whether to friend or stranger. 'How long have I been yer dear?'

Her mother, sewing in the shop, raised her eyes from her work just then, and called to her in flat, level tones to come indoors; and Cass at her leisure obeyed.

'What be doin' there? You'm a'ways in th' streets,' said her mother. And the remonstrance was spoken, not querulously, not anxiously, in a dull, grim, even way of her own. 'Take an' bide in, can't 'ee? 'S no good to be got in th' streets. An' Jim don' like to see 'ee. Get an aporn an' sit down decent.'

Cass had some rudimentary notion of filial deference, but none of wifely. She opened a drawer in the counter and took an apron and some needlework therefrom, and donned the former as a symbol of decency whilst she threaded a needle with a yard of

white cotton. So much was in deference to her mother's prejudices; but she protested against her lover's.

'If Jim don' like my ways,' she said, leaning against the wall to sew, and putting visible stitches into some cotton garment, and speaking with a little jerk between the stitches, 'he can find one whose ways he do like. I ain't so bent on marryin' with Jim.'

'He's a stiddy man,' said Mrs. Brady cheerlessly, in an absent-minded way, as one who speaks in the present with her thoughts in the past. 'They'm none so easy found.'

'If Jim thinks I care,' said Cass inconsequently but fiercely, 'I don't. Jim's took up with th' preachin' now'—jerk, and a bigger stitch than usual in the white calico—'he'd bes' marry one o' *they*.'

Mrs. Brady was sewing too, slowly and monotonously, with an action as unlike her daughter's as was possible. 'There was yer father,' she said; 'he'd niver a good word fur th' chapel folk; an' as fur stiddiness, he dranked 'nself to death, an' that you know.'

There was a moral somewhere connected with these reminiscences, but Mrs. Brady was too depressed to point it clearly. Cass pursued her own line of thought unchecked.

'There's Em'ly,' she said. 'If he wants a saint he'd bes' take up with Em'ly. *I'm willin'.*'

Conversation between Cass and her mother tended to become soliloquy. Mrs. Brady took up the thread of her own reflections. 'The life I led with 'n!' she said. 'If th' Lord 'd sin fit to take 'n twenty years afore He did, 'twould been all fur th' best, an' I'd been thankful. But there! *I* lived with 'n; nobody else knew 'n in same way. But Jim, he's a stiddy man.'

Cass smiled a little involuntarily and drew out her cotton with more gentleness. It was not displeasing to her to hear Jim's praises sung.

'An' serious-thinkin',' added her mother. 'He was fond o' 'ee—a while back he was. Em'ly's quieter spoken an' not so took up wi' th' men.'

If there were gaps in her mother's train of reasoning, Cass was quick-witted and filled them up. She was seized with a sudden restlessness and took her needlework to the door, where, however, it was too dark to sew. The wind swept in coldly from the sea, and blew about her hair and her dress, and increased her restlessness. She put up her arms and clasped her hands behind her head, and looked up the street, where the lights seemed

brighter. Presently came a step she knew, and she turned quickly and looked out at sea into the darkness.

The step was firm and heavy—not a slothful and not a hurried step—the step of a man with goodly length and strength of limb. It stopped where Cass was standing in the doorway.

‘Oh, it’s you,’ she said, looking round for a moment and looking away again. ‘It’s dull to-night—not a soul about.’

The man before her was a tall, broad-shouldered young fellow, who wore a blue, darned fisherman’s jersey, and whose face and throat and brawny hands and wrists were tanned with sea air and sun. His eyes were frank, straight-glancing, uncompromising. His lips were firm and a little stern. Both eyes and lips looked as though they seldom smiled.

‘Come indoors, Cass,’ he said, and he spoke authoritatively and a little wearily.

‘Are you goin’ in? I shan’t, then,’ said Cass. ‘It’s duller still indoors.’

Jim took off his woollen cap and shook the rain from it, and did not speak.

‘Em’ly’s indoors,’ continued Cass; ‘you can go an’ sit wi’ her. She’s fitter company ’n me. I ain’t no saint, an’ I don’ set up to be.’

‘There’s nothin’ to be proud of in that, Cass,’ said the man with a grave, perhaps irritating forbearance.

‘I don’ know,’ said Cass. ‘They’m a poor set, a poor pasty-face’ lot—if Em’ly’s a pattern. I’d be ashamed to look on the men like that, as though I was afeard on ’m—as though I expected ’m to make love to me if I didn’ turn down me eyes an’ look ugly. I’d be ashamed to look a man in th’ face if I couldn’ have me laugh with ’n nat’rel, an’ cheek ’n back when he cheeked me.’

The rain came down in a thick, heavy drizzle. The tide splashed dismally against the stones of the Hard. Cass, with her hands behind her head, stood looking out and humming as though a cheerful sun were shining on a merry world. The song she hummed was a bit of a vulgar little pantomime song which the street boys had been whistling all the winter. Jim looked down on her, and in his mind was the picture of a different woman, gentler, softer-voiced, with quieter, more retiring ways, with graver thoughts and less worldly smiles and laughter.

‘I don’ know ’bout all that, Cass,’ he said coldly; ‘but I know

this—an' I say this—I'd like the girl I'm marryin' to be a modest an' good woman, who'd mind her home an' bide there, an' bring up her childern to think of other things than flirtin' an' finery an' play-goin'. An' there's where a man who married Em'ly 'd be sure. An' if you, Cass——'

But Cass interrupted him. She turned upon him suddenly, her face crimson, her eyes flashing.

'You'd bes' be off wi' me now,' she said. 'You'm tired of it—an'—an'—I'm tired of it. We'd best have done wi' one another.'

'Maybe we'd best,' said Jim slowly.

Cass laughed; but the laugh had in it more of bravado than of mirth or indifference.

'That's settled, then,' she said. 'You'm free now to take up wi' Em'ly. I'm willin'; I shan' grieve.'

CHAPTER II.

It was a week or two later. March was nearly over; the clouds put on their white spring dress, and sailed by happily across skies that were blue again; the water danced and sparkled in the sunshine, beat merrily against the grey old stones of the Hard, and rejoiced in the good time coming. Excited children appeared, stumbling over the stones, talking vociferously to basket-laden, umbrella-laden, shawl- and wrap- and cloak-laden elders. Fine ladies in wide crinolines came tripping daintily by. Lazy young men, with their hands in their pockets, sauntered down with an air of indifference. The Hard was gay again.

Cass was the gayest of the gay. She found funds of mirth in everyone's everyday jokes; she stood in the doorway and took an unflagging interest in everything that passed around her, raised the laugh against the careful pleasure-seeker who stayed to bargain with the boatmen, sent the shaft of satire after the parsimonious who departed, joined volubly in every conversation, took a decided side in every quarrel, and proved to the meanest intelligence that her heart was light and her interest in life keen.

If she suffered she made no sign. She had a creed of womanly virtues—a creed with strange omissions and certain out-of-date beliefs writ large. To love a man who scorned her love was a shameful thing—a thing to be hustled away out of sight, ignored,

laughed down, forgotten as soon as possible. That her face crimsoned when Jim looked at her, that her pulses throbbed when he touched her hand by chance in passing, that her heart sank and all her being seemed to ache when he turned away from her and lowered his voice to speak gently to Emily, made her weep as bitter tears of shame at night as any repentant Magdalene might have shed.

It was a clear, bright, breezy night at the end of March. The shutters of the shop had been shut two hours ago. The last of the lodgers had stumbled away to bed, stopping a moment at the bottom of the dark stairs to strike a match and light a pipe to bear him company. Mrs. Brady looked, in a dull-eyed, listless way, at the crumb-littered table and the dirty plates and glasses in the little back room, and noticed that Cass had a duster in her hand and that Emily was bringing water. She was full of housewifely cares, with no housewifely enthusiasm in the cares.

‘Put them bits by on a plate, Cass,’ she directed. ‘An’ there’s the cheese; don’ let it bide out; th’ mice gets to it. You needn’ empty th’ jug; th’ milk ’ll be good by th’ mornin’.’ And after looking on for a moment at the girls’ work she slowly lighted a candle and went her way.

Emily was washing up the supper things. Cass held a damp, unlovely cloth, and wiped the plates and forks as Emily took them, one by one, from the water. For some minutes there was no sound in the room but the clatter of plate touching plate and the hiss of the gas turned low. Cass stood upright at her task; Emily stooped a little, with an air of weariness or weakness which was habitual to her.

Neither had spoken. Emily looked as she always looked—her thin little face almost colourless, her eyes cast down, her light hair drawn tightly back into a hard little hairpinned knot behind, her print gown limp, her manner gentle, deprecating. There was no obvious change in her to-night. Yet, before many minutes had passed, it somehow became clear to Cass that Emily was excited—that something unusual had happened—that Emily had something on her mind that she desired to tell.

‘They’m most done,’ said Emily at last. Although the remark referred to the dishes, Cass understood that it was in some way preparatory to a more important communication. It broke the silence.

But it was not a remark that called for answer or comment.

'There's th' tumblers,' added Emily gently after a minute.

'Yes,' said Cass.

'Best change th' water,' said Emily waveringly.

Cass, without a word, took the bowl and changed the water rapidly.

'It's funny,' said Emily in a timid and reflective tone, as she dipped the first glass in the clean water and bathed away the traces of rum and sugar, 'it's funny to think how all days is th' same—layin' meals, washin' up, brushin' an' cleanin' an' makin' beds—an' yet how differ'nt—sort o' differ'nt—some days seems.'

Cass was wiping a glass with needless vigour. Somehow she knew beforehand what was coming. Emily raised two light, timid, pathetic eyes, and looked at her with a sort of deprecating glance.

'I'd like to tell 'ee somethin', Cass; but you'll be angered wi' me.'

'Not I,' said Cass shortly. 'Angered? Not likely!'

But the assurance did not convey much encouragement. Emily bent again to her work in silence.

'It's you an' Jim, I s'pose,' said Cass after a minute, as the silence lasted.

'Yes. Don' be angered, Cass—don' be vexed—not 'long wi' me. He wouldn' take "no;" an' I *did* say "No" to 'n at first. An' he was a'ways differ'nt to th' other men—kind about things—an' serious, an' no nonsense an' jeerin'. On'y I was afraid you might—might take it unkind, Cass—an' be angered.'

There was a long pause. Cass was striving after impressiveness, eager to tell her lie with force, with truthlike intensity. She put both hands on the table, and, leaning on the downturned palms, bent across and looked steadily and calmly at Emily, whose eyes fell.

'You'm in love wi' Jim,' she said, 'an' you think all th' world's in love th' same. If I'd been in love wi' 'n, Em'ly, should I have cast 'n up? Tell me that. Do I *look* as if I was frettin'? do I? Why, I threw 'n up meself. I—I was tired o' his preachin' ways; we'd been keepin' company long enough, an' I was tired of it. It's all one to me what he does, an' where he goes, an' who he marries. An' I'm glad he's took up wi' you; you'm made fur 'n—just his sort—an' you've set yer mind on 'n fur th' last two year. It's naught to me—an' I'm glad. Don' talk o' my bein' angered. Angered? What about? Might marry a dozen wives

fur all 'twould fret me—might be brought in drowned to-morrow an' I shouldn' fash meself.'

Emily was crying in a nervous, feeble way. When Cass stood dramatically and spoke forcibly, Emily was always a little frightened. Perhaps, too, the picture of Jim with eleven rival wives and the reminder of the daily jeopardy of Jim's life at sea seemed malevolent.

'I'm goin' to bed,' said Cass in a gentler tone. Tears, in spite of herself, always softened her; her instinct, like a man's, was to run away from them. 'You'd bes' come too, Em.'

Emily followed obediently, wiping her eyes in the sleeve of her cotton gown and crying still because she had once begun. Cass looked at her uneasily, feeling conscience-stricken, as though in cowardly fashion she had struck a child.

'I'm glad if you'm happy, Em,' she said. 'Not carin' fur Jim meself, I *can* be glad, you see.'

'An' you don' care fur 'n?' said Emily dubiously. She was not shrewd at gauging others' feelings; but indifference to Jim seemed an incredible, an impossible thing. She was not sure now that she had wished Cass to be thus indifferent; she had thought, perhaps hoped, that Cass would envy her a little. 'Didn' you *ever* care?' she added. 'Did you like th' other men jus' th' same? He isn' like th' other men, Jim isn'; he doesn' think o' drinkin' an' spendin' an' layin' out all his money on hisself in plays an' drink. He's a chapel man, Jim is.'

'He's a saint,' said Cass.

Emily was following wearily up the stairs, and for a moment or two was silent. 'You don' speak very kind o' Jim,' she said presently, in a tone of querulous, vague resentment.

Cass laughed a little as she reached her door. 'You'm able to do that yerself, Em,' she said. 'Speak kind an' *do* kind; that's fur you. What I say an' do 's no odds.'

She entered the room where her mother was sleeping and shut the door behind her, and Emily went on to her little cupboard-like bedroom near the sky. Sleep came quickly to neither to-night. Emily was too happy to go prosaically to bed; she was tired with the day's running to and fro, but sleep was far from her eyes. She sat at the foot of her bed and leant her head against the wall, and in slow, happy fashion her thoughts rehearsed the interview of an hour or two ago—what Jim had said, what she had answered, at what point in the interview Jim's

grave grey eyes had smiled at her ; how she had looked down at her cotton gown and wished she had starched it on Monday ; how Jim had kissed her and she had hastily pulled down her sleeves from her elbows to her wrists with a feeling that it was not seemly to be courted thus, without her holiday attire, with bare arms and turned-up gown ; how Jim had kissed her again and she had cried for happiness, and had continued to cry because it proved so sweet to be comforted. Her pale little lips relaxed in smiles at the pleasant memories. On Sunday she would wear her best drab gown, with the zigzag trimming at the bottom. On Monday—but there her thoughts became confused and passed slowly into dreams in which ambition was not bounded by sordid probability, and her best gown was lilac silk and her crinoline of fashionable dimensions.

Cass even then was wakeful. She lay still, with her hands clasped above her head upon the pillow, careful not to move, lest her mother should awake and wonder at her sleeplessness. The tide down below was beating in noisily against the stones, but the sound was hushed in the distance, and Cass was used to the long, monotonous, muffled splash. Her bed faced a window, and now and then when the clouds parted the moonlight shone coldly in. The clouds travelled up swiftly, shut out the light, and rolled by towards the west. The wind had risen ; she listened to it as it whistled mournfully along the bare passages of the house. And at last she slept.

It was dark when she awoke. She awoke suddenly, and sat upright, with a quick, vague sense of danger. She held her breath for a moment and listened, scarcely knowing why she listened and what she feared. Next moment, above the splash of the tide and the whistling of the wind, came a strange sound as of glass loudly cracking in some room below. Cass sprang out of bed and ran out upon the landing. The air that met her seemed hot and stifling. At that moment the clouds rolled back and the moonlight streamed in through the staircase window, and she saw that staircase and passages were filled with smoke which came up in dense volumes from some room below. Crying loudly the alarm of 'Fire !' she ran back to her mother to awaken her. Her mother was awake ; in another moment all the house seemed to be awake : doors were opening, footsteps hurrying through the passages, friends calling to friends, those who slept below calling lustily the alarm to those who slept above.

A moment's pause in her mother's room, and Cass fled upstairs. The Babel was great, but the men slept soundly and some might still be sleeping. One of the younger men, Dan Earthy, was just before her, speeding upwards on the same errand. He ran up the narrow staircase to the garrets, and Cass passed hurriedly from door to door on the floor below. The doors were open; no one answered when she called. She heard Dan Earthy's voice above, and heard him descending again. The open doors seemed to shut out the moonlight; she had to grope her way back through the passage to the stairs.

On the landing and the stairs below, as she ran down, all was noise, rush, confusion. Everyone was escaping. Only, through the smoke, Jim was coming up. He was breathless; he looked at Cass and looked beyond her. Cass understood. In a moment, at the first sight of him, two thoughts had flashed through her mind. Emily slept in one of the garret rooms; Jim had not seen her. Dan Earthy must have passed her door and overlooked it; his call had not aroused her, and Jim was daring danger to awaken her. There was peril in the errand; his face betrayed it. Before he reached her she spoke.

'Go back, Jim. Safe—she's safe. Em's gone. I saw her go.'

He turned at once. There was a little lad, belonging to one of the watermen, on the landing just below him; he caught the child in his arms and ran down with him through the smoke. Without a moment's pause Cass turned too, and ran back to the topmost story, to Emily's room.

The moon was hidden again behind the clouds, and the passages were dark. Cass called as she mounted the steep stairs, but there was no answer from above. The smoke that ascended with her seemed denser than ever—stifling, blinding, suffocating. She went swiftly on, bruising herself against a jutting angle of the wall and a wooden chest standing in the passage. The door of Emily's room was open. She entered and called again. But the room was empty. Emily was gone. She had been sleeping lightly, had been the first to hear the alarm, the first of all to escape. Cass looked around, and turned again to retreat.

Two houses were destroyed in that fire in 1860. And one life was lost. 'One life only,' said the local papers next day. The houses had been so old, the alarm so late, the spread of the fire so

rapid after the alarm, that there seemed almost room for congratulation in that 'one life only.'

Only Cass had failed to escape. Why she had failed remained a mystery. Strangers, who had not known Cass, offered an explanation which to themselves was satisfactory. It was a simple matter enough. She had not estimated the danger and had gone back to her room to save some bit of finery—some favourite necklace or bonnet or gown. Draw a moral—preach a sermon—let the Vanity of Woman be the text!

The boatmen derided the conjecture. They had known Cass better.—Only one of them leant to the strangers' theory. That was Jim.

OUR SMALL IGNORANCES.

A GREAT deal of the charm of polite conversation consists not in what is said but in what is implied, not in expressions but in allusions. A light reference to some classical story, a quick glance at some page of history, a half-line from some loved poem, gives not only grace to the remarks of the speaker but zest to the attention of his audience. Seldom does a verse or a couplet fail to 'bring down the House' of Commons; reporters never omit to write '(hear)' after a line from Virgil, Shakespeare, or Milton. And the listener who says to himself, 'Ah, the Georgics, Hamlet, or L'Allegro,' feels himself to be as cultured a person as he who has uttered the quotation.

We resent the impertinence of foot-notes and even of inverted commas when an allusion is made in print and we understand it; such helps to memory or to knowledge are reflections on our culture; and yet when we make close inquiry of ourselves, we are shocked to find how ignorant we are concerning even common allusions. Many persons seem to think it quite safe to conclude that any quotation is taken from either the Bible or Shakespeare. Again, others, when they hear a very melodious line, set it down at once as 'Tennyson.' How many of us know who wrote the beautiful axiom, 'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb'? and how many can name the source of 'barbaric gold and pearl,' and 'thick as leaves in Vallombrosa'? Not long ago I wished to verify the hackneyed line, 'When wild in woods the noble savage ran;' several volumes of reference failed me, and no friend could help; until I saw the words on an American advertisement of the Yosemite Valley, with the reference 'Conquest of Granada,' and then further search made me aware that the 'Conquest of Granada' was a poem by Dryden.

In the year 1881 a volume called 'Petites Ignorances de la Conversation,' by Charles Rozan, was published by P. Ducrocq, of Paris; and in 1887 'Quizzism and its Key,' by Albert P. Southwick, appeared in its sixth edition at Boston; and in the same year the second edition of 'Queer Questions and Ready Replies,' by S. Grant Oliphant, shone out to enlighten the same city. The two American books are in every way very similar; the French

one is not altogether unlike them. Much information for English readers may be gathered from all three, and much in all three is quite useless for us. For instance, the very first of the 'Queer Questions' does not rouse in us much thirst for the 'Ready Reply : 'What town in Vermont was taken by the Confederates during the late Civil War?' The reply is shortly 'St. Albans,' and half a page of history is given with it. Opening 'Quizzism' at random I read the question : 'What general has two graves?' The answer states that General Wayne's remains were exhumed at Erie seventy-six years ago, and some of them re-interred at Radnor; so that he is said to have two graves. At p. 120 of the 'Petites Ignorances' I find a disquisition on the proverbial expression, 'Les enfants vont à la moutarde;' it is too long to quote here, and, having no equivalent in English, is not of much interest. But as I turn over the leaves of the three little books I find a great deal of information which, like sunshine in a shady place, shows me my own ignorances and negligences.

Every cottage, thanks to America, possesses its clock, and, thanks to Waterbury, almost every pocket its watch. But why are the dials divided into twelve divisions of five minutes each? Hear Mr. S. Grant Oliphant: 'We have sixty divisions on the dials of our clocks and watches because the old Greek astronomer, Hipparchus, who lived in the second century before Christ, accepted the Babylonian system of reckoning time—that system being sexagesimal. The Babylonians were acquainted with the decimal system, but for common or practical purposes they counted by *sossi* and *sari*, the *sossos* representing sixty, and the *saros* sixty times six—thirty-six hundred. From Hipparchus that mode of reckoning found its way into the works of Ptolemy about 150 A.D., and hence was carried down the stream of science and civilisation, and found its way to the dial-plates of our clocks and watches.

The language and literature of America, being so closely related to that of England, present few difficulties to us except in the colloquialisms of recent times; continental idioms and proverbs, based chiefly on local customs and incidents, are often quite inexplicable by us. But there are many Americanisms very puzzling to Englishmen; and, again, many Gallicisms which at once reveal an affinity to expressions of our own.

We use *Uncle Sam* as a facetious name for the United States; Mr. S. Grant Oliphant explains its origin thus: 'Uncle Sam Wilson' was the government inspector of supplies at Troy in the

war of 1812. Those edibles of which he approved were labelled *U. S.*, then a new sign for *United States*; the workmen supposed that these letters were the initials of 'Uncle Sam,' and the mistake became a joke and a lasting one. So 'Brother Jonathan' had a simple origin: Washington thought very highly of the judgment of Jonathan Trumbull the elder, then governor of Connecticut, and constantly remarked, 'We must consult Brother Jonathan.' The name soon became regarded as a national sobriquet. Mr. Southwick, in 'Quizzism,' gives some curious information about the term *Yankee*; of course, we all know that it is the word *English* as pronounced by the American Indians, but we do not all know that 'in a curious book on the "Round Towers of Ireland" the origin of the term *Yankee-doodle* was traced to the Persian phrase *Yanki-dooniah*, or *Inhabitants of the New World*. Layard, in his book on "Nineveh and its Remains," also mentions *Yanghidunia* as the Persian name of America.' The song *Yankee Doodle*, Mr. Southwick tells us, is as old as Cromwell's time; it was the Protector himself who 'stuck a feather in his hat' when going to Oxford; the bunch of ribbons which held the feather was a *maccaroni*. We know that *maccaroni* was a cant term for a dandy, that feathers were worn in the hats of Royalists, and that Oxford was a town of the highest importance during the Civil War. I do not quite see how round towers, the Persian language, and Old Noll come to be so intimately connected, even though, as Mr. Southwick tells, the song was at first known as *Nankee Doodle*.

America must not, as some of her sons have done, imagine that the dollar-mark \$ stands for *U. S.*, the *S.* being written upon the *U.* For both the dollar and the sign for it were in use long before there were any United States. Both Mr. Southwick and Mr. Oliphant give the very probable origin indicated by the design on the reverse of the Spanish dollar—the Pillars of Hercules with a scroll round each pillar, the scrolls perhaps representing the serpents which Hercules strangled while yet he was a child in his cradle. There is also another theory that the dollar-mark is a form of the figure 8, because in old times the dollar was a piece of eight reals. The expression 'almighty dollar' was first used by Washington Irving in his sketch of a 'Creole Village,' 1837.

Filibustering is a slang American term, corresponding to our *obstruction* in Parliamentary language, and appears to have had a short but adventurous career, starting as the English *flyboat*,

then becoming the Spanish *filibote*, or pirate-ship, next getting naturalised on the Vly, a small river in Holland, and then invading Cuba under Lopez in 1851, and in the form of *filibosters* appearing as the designation of his followers.

In all countries there is a large literature clustering around the name, history, character, and qualities of his Satanic Majesty, the Prince of Darkness. One of his synonyms is *Old Harry*, which, Mr. Oliphant says, may be a corruption of the Scandinavian *Hari*, one of the names of Odin, or another form of *Old Hairy*. *Old Nick* is derived from the name of the river-god *Nick* or *Neck*, though Butler, the author of 'Hudibras,' says that it comes from *Niccolo Machiavelli*! And *Old Scratch* must be taken to be derived from *Scrat*, a 'house or wood demon of the ancient North.' M. Rozan is strong on all diabolical points; 'diable à quatre,' he says, has come down from the old Miracle Plays in which, at first, one demon was enough; but enterprising managers soon added a second, and finally some Irving or Harris of the day crowded his stage with four devils. Sainte-Beuve calls Henry IV. 'ce diable-à-quatre.' The French kings were choice in their oaths; each had his own. We remember how, in 'Quentin Durward,' Louis XI. iterates 'Pasques Dieu!' even to weariness. Henry IV. took a certain portion of the person of St. Gris under his special protection. Who St. Gris was appears very doubtful: perhaps St. Francis, founder of the Grey Friars; perhaps an imaginary saint invented as the patron of drunkards, as St. Lâche was invented for the lazy, and Ste. Nitouche for hypocrites. Had Henry IV. been an Italian, he would have invoked the *corpo di Bacco* rather than the *ventre St. Gris*. To swear by some portion of the Deity or of a saint was the fashionable and æsthetic thing in the Middle Ages; true, our forefathers said *pardy*, which was *par Dieu*, but they also said *tudieu* (which is *tête-Dieu*), *corbleu* (*corps-de-Dieu*), *ventre-bleu* (*ventre de Dieu*), *sam-bleu* (*sang-de-Dieu*), and *morbleu* (*morte-de-Dieu*). So in English they said *Zounds* (God's wounds), 'Sblood and 'Sdeath (God's blood and God's death). Henry IV. of France is said to have introduced the curious oath *jarnicoton!* into polite conversation; he had been in the habit of saying *je renie Dieu* (I deny or blaspheme God); his confessor, the Father Coton, a Jesuit, who refused a cardinal's hat, expostulated with the royal penitent and begged him rather to use the words *je renie Coton*; hence arose the new expression. M. Rozan tells this story, and many others, with a delightful touch of

humour, which, strange to say, is totally wanting in the American books. The transition of *Mort-Dieu* into *Morbleu* is seen in the following epitaph by Benserade, a wit and poet much esteemed in his own day at the court of Louis XIV., but whose works have long been justly consigned to oblivion; the exception may be this stanza :

Ci-git, oui, par la morbieu !
Le Cardinal de Richelieu ;
Et ce qui cause mon ennui,
Ma pension git avec lui.

M. Rozan also gives another short poem called the 'Epithé-
ton des quatre rois :

Quand la Pasque Dieu décéda,	(Louis XI.)
Le Bon Jour Dieu lui succéda ;	(Charles VIII.)
Au Bon Jour Dieu deffunct et mort	
Succéda le Dyable m'emport.	(Louis XII.)
Luy décéda, nous voyons comme	
Nous duist la Foi de Gentil Homme.	(François I.)

(The word *duist* is part of *duire*, an obsolete verb, meaning to *suit*.) We say *deuce* as a mild form of *devil*, and the French say *diantre* as a mild form of *diable*. But not even M. Rozan can explain why the lovely freshness of early girlhood is called the *beauté de diable*. One would naturally suppose that the innocence of youth was utterly unlike any beauty which the author of evil could impart, and to him one would rather attribute the charms, if any, of rouged cheeks, dyed hair, stuffed bust, and self-possessed manners. There is an old French proverb, *Le diable était beau quand il était jeune*, which may be in some way connected with this curious phrase, but I hardly see in what the link can consist.

One of Mr. Oliphant's 'Queer Questions' is this: 'What was the origin of the expression "Printer's Devil"?' He answers it thus: 'Aldus Manutius (1440-1515), the celebrated Venetian printer and publisher, had a small black slave whom the superstitious believed to be an emissary of Satan. To satisfy the curious, one day he said publicly in church, "I, Aldus Manutius, printer to the Holy Church, have this day made public exposure of the printer's devil. All who think he is not flesh and blood, come and pinch him." Hence in Venice arose the somewhat curious sobriquet "Printer's Devil."'

I must remark, *en passant*, that 1549 is more probably the year of the birth of Aldus Manutius the elder. If Venice saw the

first Printer's Devil, it also saw the first modern newspaper, which was published in that city; a 'gazetta,' a small coin worth one farthing, was paid for the privilege of reading it. The name of this ancestor of journals was the 'Notizie Scritte,' and it appeared about 1536. The 'Gazette de France' came into being in 1631, but had a forerunner, the 'Mercure Français;' the 'London Gazette' dates from 1666, and followed on the 'Public Intelligencer.' The 'Acta Diurna' of Rome were first published about the year B.C. 623 (Mr. Southwick says 691). They were hung up in some public place, and must have been rallying points for the quidnuncs of the city. They contained the political speeches of the day, the law reports, police news, lists of births, marriages, divorces, and funerals, and advertisements of the public games. Private persons made copies of these 'Acts' to send to their friends in the country. We can hardly call such a news-sheet by the name of newspaper, but there is in existence a weekly journal of great antiquity. It is said to have first appeared in A.D. 911, and is called the 'King Pau,' or chief-sheet, and is published at Peking. In its early days it was irregular in its dates of publication, but in 1351 became hebdomadal, and in 1882 assumed a new shape. Three editions are published in the day, containing matter of different kinds, and are called respectively the 'Business,' the 'Official,' and the 'Country' sheets. Their combined circulation amounts to about fourteen thousand. M. Rozan, in one of his sly notes, quotes Eugène Hattins' opinion that 'gazette' as the name of a newspaper is derived from *gazza*, a magpie.

Strangely as names of things have come down to us, even more strangely have come names of persons. The Wandering Jew is one of those mysterious characters which never fail to interest us in whatever form they present themselves—history, romance, or opera. He is said to have been a Jew named Abasuerus, who refused to allow the Lord Jesus Christ to rest before his house when carrying His cross to Calvary. In 1644, Michob Ader, a very extraordinary person, appeared in Paris and said that he was the Wandering Jew, having been usher of the Court of Judgment of Jerusalem when sentence was given against the Messiah. He was an astoundingly well-informed man, and no one convicted him of the imposture which all knew him to be practising. Eugène Sue founded, as is well known, a powerful romance on the story of 'Le Juif errant.'

John O'Groat is reported by Mr. Southwick to have been a

Dutchman who settled himself at the most northern point of Scotland in the reign of James IV. He had nine sons who strove for precedence, and to settle their dispute he made nine doors to his house so that none should go out or come in before another.

The 'Roi d'Yvetot' is another personage either historical or mythological, perhaps both, for there is no distinct line of demarcation between the two. M. Rozan says that the king and the kingdom of Yvetot have been matter of discussion since the time of Louis XI.; that François I. called the lady of that place 'reine;' that Henry IV. said, 'If I lose the kingdom of France, I will at least be king of Yvetot;' that Béranger made a pretty song on this subject; therefore certainly there must have been such a monarch. The story runs that the Lord of Yvetot, Walter or Gautier, was much loved by Clotaire, 'but whispering tongues can poison truth,' and they succeeded in depriving Walter of the affection of his sovereign. He was compelled to fly; but, having provided himself with letters from the Pope, he returned to Soissons, hoping to recover the good graces of his master. He presented himself before the king in the cathedral on Good Friday. Clotaire, forgetting day, place, and example, drew his sword and plunged it into the heart of Walter. Then remorse and the Pope, St. Agapet, together forced Clotaire to expiate his crime by raising the lordship of Yvetot into a kingdom for the heirs and successors of Walter. I may supplement M. Rozan's information by mentioning that the title 'roi' of Yvetot was not used until the fourteenth century, whereas Clotaire lived in the sixth; it was officially recognised by Louis XI., François I., and Henri II. When the estate passed by marriage into the Du Bellay family, the title 'roi' gave place to that of 'prince souverain,' which also died out in course of time.

Another Middle-Age expression is 'A Roland for an Oliver.' These two heroes were paladins of Charlemagne, who fought in single combat during five consecutive days on an island in the Rhine, without either gaining the least advantage. Again, who was Rodomont, who has bequeathed us his name in *rodomontade*? We are told by M. Rozan that he was a king of Algiers, brave, but haughty and insolent, whom the Count of Boiardo in 'Orlando Innamorato' and Ariosto in 'Orlando Furioso' have made popular. A man who talks much of his own daring is said in French 'faire le Rodomont;' and we English have made a substantive which

we use in common parlance, knowing little of the hero of romance who uttered the first rodomontade.

Roger Bontemps is a character often alluded to, but, I venture to say, little known in England. *Ménage*, as quoted by M. Rozan, thinks that the expression 'has come from some one named Roger who diverted himself, or, in fact, gave himself a good time.' This derivation is too simple and self-apparent to be quite satisfying, so we will seek for another. Jean Baillet, Bishop of Auxerre, had a secretary who was both priest and poet, whose name was Roger de Colleye, and who was surnamed from his merry disposition *Bontemps*. The partisans of this derivation quote a ballad which begins thus:

Ce qui m'aymera si me suyve !
Je suis Bon Temps, vous le voyez, &c.

On the other hand, the reverend fathers of Trévoux have exhumed a lord of the house of Bontemps which was very illustrious in the country of Vivarais, in Languedoc then, now in the department of the Ardèche; this family of Bontemps always gave the name of Roger to its senior member (a somewhat curious fact, as death must occasionally have carried off the chief; perhaps every Bontemps was christened Roger as every Count Reuss is christened Henry). There arose a Roger Bontemps whose gay humour, hospitality, valour, and other mediæval virtues were so well known that his name was the synonym for a good fellow, and afterwards became corrupted into meaning an idle and dissipated scamp. M. Rozan, with his knowing smile, adds that Le Duchat and Pasquier found yet other origins for the term; the one asserting that it comes from *réjouï bontemps*, the other deriving it from *rouge bontemps*, because, says Pasquier, 'red colour in the face denotes a certain quality of gaiety and light-heartedness.'

'The real Simon Pure' is a gentleman of whom we in these degenerate days know too little. Here is Mr. Oliphant's history of him: 'He was a Pennsylvanian Quaker in Mrs. Centlivre's comedy, "A Bold Stroke for a Wife." This worthy person "being about to visit London to attend the quarterly meeting of his sect, his friend, Aminadab Holdfast, sends a letter of recommendation and introduction to another Quaker, Obadiah Prim, a rigid and stern man, who is guardian of Anne Lovely, a young lady worth 30,000*l*. Colonel Feignwell, another character in the same play, who is enamoured of Miss Lovely and her handsome fortune, availing himself of an accidental discovery of Holdfast's letter and

of its contents, succeeds in passing himself off on Prim as his expected visitor. The real Simon Pure calling at Prim's house is treated as an impostor, and is obliged to depart in order to hunt up witnesses who can testify to his identity. Meanwhile Feignwell succeeds in getting from Prim a written and unconditional consent to his marriage with Anne. No sooner has he obtained possession of the document than Simon Pure reappears with his witnesses, and Prim discovers the trick that has been put upon him.' Here endeth Mr. Oliphant's information. Whoever desires to know whether of the twain suitors obtained the hand of the lady must consult Mrs. Centlivre's play itself.

We all live in a very wholesome dread of Mrs. Grundy. She first saw the light, it is said, in Thomas Morton's 'Speed the Plough.' 'In the first scene Mrs. Ashfield shows herself very jealous of neighbour Grundy, and Farmer Ashfield says to her, "Be quiet, woolye? Allways ding-dinging Dame Grundy into my ears: What will Mrs. Grundy zay? What will Mrs. Grundy think?"'

Who was Philippine, and why do we wish her 'bon jour'? Yesterday we dined at a friend's house and were happily placed beside a charming young lady. At dessert we cracked an almond in its shell, and on opening it found that it contained a double kernel, one half of which we bestowed on our neighbour, the other half we ourselves devoured. This morning, all unsuspecting of evil, we met our fair friend in the street; she exclaimed, 'Bon jour, Philippine!' and we, albeit our name is not Philippine, nor even Philippe, are bound by every law of honour and society to make a suitable present to the lady. Having been thus caught, we anxiously inquire who and what is or was this Philippine? Now, M. Rozan goes quite deeply into the subject. He says that the game is not unknown in France, though less practised than in Germany. A reference to a German dictionary shows that they have a word, *Vielliebchen*, which corresponds to Philippine. 'Guten Morgen, Vielliebchen,' was the original phrase; it gradually glided into 'Guten Morgen, Philippchen;' the French took it over and made it 'Bon jour, Philippine.' M. Rozan says that *Vielliebchen* is pronounced almost precisely the same as *Philippine*! It seems to us barbarous English astonishing that the delicate ear of a Frenchman, whose refinements of pronunciation are hopeless to us, can yet hear no difference between those two words: the soft French with its final and just indicated *e*,

and the harsh German with *b* in the place of one *p*, the guttural *ch* for another *p*, and *en* instead of *ine*! This must be one of M. Rozan's quiet jokes at the expense of his own countrymen; he says that Philippine 'rime exactement avec l'expression des Allemands.' The French ear detects a difference between the acute, grave, and circumflex accents on the letter *e*; thus *tête*, *tête*, and *tête* would each have its own special sound. We English think we do well if we distinguish the circumflex from the grave.

It is told of M. Arsène Houssaye (commonly called *Saint-Arsène* because he was the refuge and patron of young authors) that Monselet came to him with a manuscript; said M. Houssaye to the young writer, soon to be famous, 'If I were you, instead of Monselet, I should sign myself Monselé; it is softer.' Monselet, horrified and irate, exclaimed, 'Monselé? Like Franjolé? No, thank you!' Now, I am afraid that to English ears the final *let* and *lé* sound almost identical. Yet M. Rozan asserts that to French ears *Vielliebchen* is exactly like Philippine! The surname of St.-Arsène appears to have been either Houssaye or Housset!

Various animals have become famous and left their names as proverbs or puzzles. I do not now allude to such as Bucephalus, the horse of Alexander, but rather to such as Rosinante, the charger of Don Quixote; not to the dog of Montargis, but the dog of Lance. The Kilkenny cats are doubtless entirely historical, but who was the equally famous cat who was let out of the bag? She was not unlike the pig in a poke (*poche* = pocket). If a foolish bumpkin bought a pig in a poke, well and good; if he opened the pocket or bag and a cat jumped out, he discovered the trick played on him, and was off his bargain.

There is a certain cow whose death has insured her a long literary life. The event is chronicled in verse, which runs somewhat in this style:

There was a man who bought a cow,
And he had no food to give her,
So he took up his fiddle and played her a tune:
'Consider, my cow, consider,
This is not the time for grass to grow—
Consider, my cow, consider.'

This is said to have been the famous tune of which the old cow died, but long experience has convinced me that an obvious derivation is seldom the correct one, and I would rather put forward

another. Among the inspiring airs often performed on the melodious and richly modulated bagpipe is one known as 'Nathaniel Gow's Lament for his Brother,' and when listening to it I have felt an internal conviction that it, and no other, is the 'tune the old Gow died of.'

'The high horse' is another animal whose history is worth investigating; the French call him 'le grand cheval.' In the days of chivalry each knight had two horses, the palfrey and the charger. The palfrey (*palefroi*, from the Latin *paraveredus*, post-horse) was the steed ordinarily used for show and hack work, and the charger (*destrier*, which the squire led by his right hand, *ad dexterum*) was the war-horse. When the knight mounted his high horse, he was known to be angry, proud, indignant, and quarrelsome; and when we moderns are 'on the high horse' we are certainly in no amiable mood.

Nor is an *unlicked cub* a very amiable creature; in French he is frankly called an 'ours mal léché.' The English *cub* is a young bear, the French *ours* may be of any age; indeed, we may designate a surly old man as a *bear*. The following is quoted from Balzac: 'This Léchard was an old journeyman pressman, who was called in printer's slang an *ours*; the pressman (*pressier*) has a to-and-fro movement as he carries the ink to the press, which resembles the movement of a bear.'

Avoir des rats dans la tête is a phrase which corresponds to our expression *to have a bee in his bonnet*. The Abbé Desfontaines, best known as the opponent of Voltaire, says that 'this expression comes from *ratum*, which means a thought, a resolution, an intention.' *Rat* from *ratum* was naturally confounded with *rat*, the unpleasant animal, and hence arose what has become an obscure proverbial phrase. M. Rozan quotes, but specially adds that he does not endorse, the punning remark: 'Les femmes ont des souris à la bouche et des rats dans la tête.'

Let me for a few minutes leave the animals and consider that word *calembour*, which appears to have encountered as much contumely in France as its equivalent in England. It has been said among us that the man who would make a pun would pick a pocket, and across the Channel have been debated the questions, 'Is one a fool because one makes a pun?' and 'Must one necessarily make puns if one is a fool?' These are weighty questions, and are yet unanswered. As to the derivation of the word *calembour* there are various theories. It is a modern word, not known until the

eighteenth century. At the Court of Versailles there was a Count von Kallemberg, ambassador from the German Empire; his broken French resulted in such odd combinations of words that after a time every incongruous union of symphonious syllables came to be called by his name. Then there was also an Abbé Calemborg, an amusing figure in German stories; he was the father of the *calembour*. M. Victorien Sardou has conclusively shown that the word comes from, or rather is, *calembour*, a sweet-scented Indian wood. M. Darmesteter, the *savant*, is certain that *calembour* comes from *calembourdain*, another form of *calembredaine*, fib, quibble, subterfuge. Of these various derivations the French punster may take his choice. But now, *revenons à nos moutons*.

The story of the sheep is to be found among the jests of Pathelin. Guillaume, a draper, has been robbed by Pathelin, a lawyer, of six ells of cloth, and by Agnelet, his shepherd, of twenty-six sheep. Guillaume intends to make it a hanging matter for the shepherd, but when he comes into court to accuse him he finds that Pathelin, who stole the cloth, is the lawyer employed to defend Agnelet. With his head running upon both his sheep and his cloth he makes a delightful confusion of the two losses; the judge says—

Sus, revenons à nos moutons,
Qu'en fut-il ?

and the draper replies—

Il en a pris six aunes,
De neuf francs.

The judge is much puzzled, and continually entreats Guillaume to return to his sheep.

Another famous animal is the *poulet*, when in the form of a pretty pink note or a delicate 'correspondence card.' Many a good story is to be traced to Madame de Sévigné, whom we do not read much, though we read a great deal about her. Some one wrote her a note, and begged her not to show it to any human being; but at the end of several days she did show it, with the remark, 'If I had brooded over it any longer, I should have hatched it!' This was a *calembour*, of course, but it does not solve the difficulty of the derivation of *poulet* in the sense of *billet*.

From fowl to fish is not a very long stride. The *poisson d'avril* is as popular in France as the April Fool is with us. Why we use our expression is not difficult to understand, but

why our neighbours should call that person a fish who falls into the trap of a practical joke on the first of April is very mysterious. Francis, Duke of Lorraine, whom Louis XIII. held prisoner at the Castle of Nancy, contrived to escape on a first of April by swimming across the river Meurthe, which gave rise to a saying among the people of Lorraine that the French had had a fish in custody. But as the escape of this Duke of Lorraine is only spoken of in explanation of the *poisson d'avril*, and as Louis XIII. never had a Duke of Lorraine as his prisoner, the story is somewhat hard to believe. The reason assigned by graver authorities than popular legends is that the first of April is the day on which the sun enters the zodiacal sign of the Fishes. But unfortunately *Pisces* is the sign for February. I may perhaps be allowed to bring forward my own solution of this difficult question of origin. I would refer both the fish and the fool to St. Benedict, whose festival is March 21, a date which, when the change was made from the Old to the New Style, became April 1. It is recorded that a holy priest at a distance, one Easter Day, became miraculously aware, as he was preparing his own good dinner, that St. Benedict was faint with hunger, thinking that the Lenten fast was not yet over. Of course the priest hastened to share his meal with the saint; he doubtless threw to the birds the fish which lay in St. Benedict's larder, and probably applied the English term which we have been considering to the saint himself. This derivation is strengthened by the fact that March 21 is the earliest day on which Easter Eve can fall.

À propos de bottles, or à propos de poissons, we may glance at the land of *Cocagne*, where plenty reigns, whose streets are paved with gold, and where all men may eat, drink, and be merry. This land is said to have been the ancient duchy of Lauraguais in Languedoc. In that country were made conical cakes known as *coquaignes de pastel*, or shells of woad. The dye of the woad was very valuable, and thus the land of the *coquaigne* came to mean a land of prosperity and plenty. But if that derivation does not please us we may accept another. *Cuccagna* was a district in Italy, between Rome and Loretto, where living was cheap; there was a poet named Martin Coccaie, who wrote of this delightful country. The word also signified a loaf or cake, and came from *coquere*, to cook. There are other derivations, but I think I have cited enough.

It can scarcely be doubted that our word Cockney comes from

the French *cocagne*; to the rustic mind the capital, whether Paris or London, is the abode of plenty; London is the English *cocagne*, and the inhabitant of *Cocagne* is the Cockney. I am aware that there is a legend of a Londoner who visited the country for the first time, and next morning was awakened by the crowing of chanticleer. He is said to have exclaimed later in the day to his host, 'This morning I heard a cock neigh!' But I pass over the origin of the word as too derogative of the intelligence of Londoners.

I used above the expression *à propos de bottes*, and as I am bound in this paper to mind my *p*'s and *q*'s I will endeavour to throw some light on that subject. It is an abbreviation of '*à propos de bottes, combien l'aune de fagots?*' Now this is an absurd question, on the face of it, for faggots are not sold by the ell. But then *aune* is also the French for *elder tree*, the timber of which might be sold by the ell, and afterwards split up into faggots; and again, *se fagoter* is to dress in a slovenly manner—as we say, to *look like a bundle of rags*, and rags might be sold by the ell. Wonderful combinations of ideas are evolved from proverbial phrases. Boots have ever played an important part in modern languages; we speak of seven-leagued boots, a reminiscence of Tom Thumb and the Ogre; we talk of sock and buskin as synonyms of tragedy and comedy; *graisser ses bottes* is to prepare for a long journey, and, by extension of meaning, to die; and 'to die in one's shoes' is a vulgar euphuism for being hanged.

To mind our *p*'s and *q*'s, again. Why must we be careful of those letters more than of others? Because in the olden days the host kept his customers' scores in chalk on the panels of the doors. P stood for pint, and Q for quart, and it behoved the guest to watch his score lest he should exceed his proper number of *p*'s and *q*'s. The printer, too, must needs be careful of the two letters, which in type are so very much alike. To suit, or to fit, to a T is a plain allusion to the carpenter's T, which is much used in mechanics and drawings.

There is an immense number of words and expressions which we use in daily conversation without reflecting on their original meaning, and of which the history is both instructive and amusing; but I will now only explain the French saying '*Chacun a sa marotte*,' equivalent to 'Every man has his hobby.' *Hobby* is a contraction of *hobby-horse*, the wooden creature on which a

small boy rides round the nursery, or the animal which prances at fairs and village feasts. I have not gone into the derivation of *hobby*, but I would suggest that it may be *au bois*—wooden; or from *abbey*, because popular entertainments in the Middle Ages were chiefly provided by the regular clergy.

Marotte is literally the *fool's bauble*, and is a contraction of *Marionette*, which is, of course, a familiar form of *Marie*, the chief female figure in the old Mysteries; the little figure on the *bauble* is a baby or doll; the Scotch *bawbee*, or halfpenny, received that name because it was first struck to commemorate the birth of Mary, Queen of Scots; *bawbee* reminds us of the cognate *poupée* and the Italian *bambino*—p and b being interchangeable letters; even our *doll* may be only another form of *poll* and *moll*, both of which are diminutives of Mary. Again, we have the word *puppet*, an English form of *poupée*. The Italians have *popazza* for *doll*, and the North American Indians *papoose* for *babe*.

One of the gravest pages of English history records how the Speaker's mace was stigmatised as '*that bauble*;' by implication that brutal phrase classed the Speaker Lenthall with the majority of mankind (see Carlyle).

The hobby, or *marotte*, of many profound thinkers is philology; therefore I need make no excuse for having endeavoured to explain some of our small ignorances of words and expressions.

A FINANCIAL OPERATION.

It was nearly twelve o'clock on a bright spring morning. Yet Colonel Punter was still busily employed in his bachelor rooms in Piccadilly. The Colonel was a fresh-complexioned, somewhat portly man, of about fifty years of age, with grizzled hair and moustache and a vigour of eye and form which, although he had retired, gave ample evidence that he was blessed with plenty of strength and energy, and would be quite ready for hard service should his country require it of him. On this morning he was correcting the proofs of a pamphlet that was shortly to appear, entitled 'The Proper Formations in Savage Warfare.' This pamphlet was looked forward to in military circles with a good deal of interest, for Colonel Punter was a very well-known man, and was highly thought of as a scientific soldier. He had been at work on these proofs for two hours, and had just made up his mind that it was time to walk down to his club, when his servant entered the room and, presenting a card, said that the lady would be very much obliged if Colonel Punter would grant her an interview.

'Certainly,' said the Colonel; then glancing at the card he muttered to himself: 'Mrs. Verner—I can't remember ever to have heard the name before. I wonder what she wants.' Then, being a kindly and courteous man, he rose from his writing-desk, pushed the proofs away, and took up the newspaper, so that he might not appear to have been interrupted at work. Scarcely had he completed this little manœuvre when the door opened and a lady, well but quietly dressed, was shown into the room. She was tall and graceful, and wore a heavy veil, which, however, on the servant's retiring, she threw back, and, holding out her hand, advanced with a smile, saying:

'I am afraid, Colonel Punter, you will have forgotten me.'

The Colonel was quite equal to the occasion and returned her greeting cordially, racking his brains, in the meantime, to think where he could have seen that beautiful, sad face before. It was the face of a woman of about thirty-five years of age, or perhaps a little more, with dark hair and eyes, and an indefinable expres-

sion of mirth beneath its sadness, indicating, as it seemed, a lightness of heart which the troubles of the world might have dimmed but could not obliterate. Observing, apparently, the Colonel's somewhat puzzled expression, she continued gaily :

'I see that, as I expected, I shall have to help your memory. Don't you remember Miss Maud Mervyn, when you were quartered at Dover more than twenty years ago? Why, Colonel Punter, you had just got your company then, and we used to dance together at the Dover balls.'

'Give me a moment, Mrs. Verner,' he replied ; 'twenty years is a long time for an old man's memory to go back in a flash.'

'Now, don't deny it,' continued she, laughing. 'I see you don't remember me, but I am not at all offended, for, indeed, how should you? I was a slip of a girl then, and you were, if you will allow me to say so, a man of somewhere about thirty. I, no doubt, was an infinitely insignificant person to you then, as, on the other hand, you were a very important person to me. But, you see, I am obliged to plead our old acquaintance, Colonel Punter, as it is my only excuse for the liberty I have taken in calling on you.'

'Excuse of any kind is quite unnecessary,' said the Colonel with a slight bow and smile.

'It is very kind of you to say so,' she replied ; 'and when you have heard my sad story, I think you will give me the advice which I have come to ask of you.'

'If it is a subject on which I am at all qualified to speak,' said he, 'I shall be most happy.'

'I think it is decidedly your subject, Colonel Punter,' she replied, 'for it is about my son, who is in the army, that I wish to ask your advice.'

'Your son—in the army!' exclaimed the Colonel with an inflexion of voice that was decidedly complimentary to the youthfulness of her appearance. 'May I ask his regiment?'

'The 60th Lancers.'

'The 60th Lancers!' repeated the Colonel. 'Why, Mrs. Verner, I know your son. His commanding officer is an old friend of mine, and I have a slight acquaintance with the whole regiment.'

'This is very singular and very lucky,' said she. 'As you know my poor boy's regiment, I think you will be better able to understand and advise on the troubles and difficulties I am in

regarding him. Will you let me tell you my sad story from the beginning, or shall I be boring you?’

‘Oh, pray don’t think so for a moment, Mrs. Verner,’ said the Colonel; and he would have liked to add, ‘Nothing you could say would bore me,’ but felt it would be unsuitable to the occasion.

‘Well,’ she continued with a sigh, ‘my married life was a short and not a happy one. My husband’s health was always bad, and for this reason we had to reside abroad. When we had been married two years my husband died and left me alone in the world with an infant boy.’ She paused and seemed lost for a moment in sad memories, while the Colonel glanced sympathetically at her, but thought it well to say nothing. ‘Well,’ she continued, ‘during the last twenty years I have lived almost entirely abroad, but I sent my son to be educated at Eton, and about two years ago he obtained a commission in the 60th Lancers. Words cannot tell what a comfort and joy my son has been to me during my lonely widowhood—I have been so proud of all his school triumphs, I have always been his confidante when he got into trouble. You see, Colonel Punter, I am sadly constrained to use the past tense, for I am grieved to say that since he entered the army his manner to me has gradually changed, until now, when I do see him, which is not often, he who used to be all frankness and love is all coldness and reserve—and—and—if this goes on it will break my heart.’ Here she fairly gave way and covered her face with her hands. Colonel Punter’s soft heart was always much perturbed at the sight of a woman’s tears. So he kept murmuring in his most soothing accents:

‘Pray, madam, pray calm yourself. I am sure I will do all I can to help you.’

In a few minutes she recovered herself and said:

‘You must excuse my breaking down. I know it always vexes a man to see a woman’s tears. But I will promise not to do so again, and I dare say you are wondering what you can do to help me in this matter. Well, the fact is, I want to know the worst. I have heard rumours about my son which make me shudder whenever I think of them. I hear that he has given himself out in the regiment as the son of rich people who live abroad, and that he is living in most extravagant style; whereas it is, in truth, with considerable difficulty that his moderate allowance is regularly paid.’

‘Young scoundrel!’ ejaculated the Colonel. Then remembering that a son must never be abused to his mother, added: ‘I beg your pardon, Mrs. Verner, but for the moment my indignation got the better of me. Besides, these reports are, perhaps, not true. I do not know the affairs of the junior members of the corps sufficiently well to be able to give an opinion on the subject.’

‘Oh, I quite understand that, but do tell me what course I had better take,’ she said, glancing appealingly at him. ‘How am I, a helpless woman, to find out whether these dreadful reports are true or not? and yet I feel that I must know the truth or go mad.’

After a pause, during which the Colonel was evidently lost in thought, he replied: ‘Mrs. Verner, I promised to do the best I could for you, and I will. I am going down to Aldershot in a few days, and I shall there see Colonel Thompson; from him I will ascertain what reputation for wealth your son has in the regiment. I admit I don’t much like the detective part of the business, but I feel that it is a sacred duty to protect a lady in your sad position.’

‘Oh, how kind of you, Colonel Punter!’ she exclaimed. ‘This is more than I had any right to expect that you would do for me. But, oh, let me beg of you not to expose my son if these rumours should be true, and let me implore you not to seek an interview with him on the subject. If you learn from the Colonel, as you kindly say you will, whether what I have heard is true or not, and would, on your return to town, grant me a few words of advice as to what course I had better take, I should be very grateful.’

‘I shall be most happy, Mrs. Verner,’ said he briskly, ‘but I feel sure that you will find that there is nothing in it after all. Your son, as far as I know him, is a charming young fellow, and quite incapable of the frauds which these accusations impute to him. So pray keep up your spirits, and, if it is convenient to you, let us arrange to meet here at this time on this day week.’

The time was quite convenient to Mrs. Verner, and, with many apologies for the liberty she had taken in calling to ask his advice, she departed.

On his journey down to Aldershot the next morning Colonel Punter thought a good deal about his fair visitor of the day before and her troubles. He heaped, moreover, many hard words on the head of young Verner (for, of course, he supposed him, at any rate, partially guilty). ‘Selfish young rascals, all the lot of them!’ said he to himself; ‘they don’t mind a straw how much trouble

they bring on their relations, if only they can indulge themselves; and such a charming woman too!' And then he went off into a reverie, in the midst of which he found himself speculating as to whether a man of his age was absolutely and irrevocably too old to marry without making himself look like a fool; and as the train arrived at Aldershot he had just come to the conclusion that there was a good deal to be said on both sides.

That very evening he saw Colonel Thompson, and in the course of conversation managed to ask his questions about young Verner, and found out that, according to Colonel Thompson, Verner was the son of a rich merchant in Singapore, and that his people had not been in England for many years.

'Yes, thank you,' said Colonel Punter; 'I thought I had heard of his people in England, but I suppose I must be mistaken,' and then he changed the subject. He happened, however, just before mess (he was a guest of the regiment that night), to meet Verner by himself, and he suddenly resolved, in spite of the widow's request, to say a few words to him. So, stepping forward and addressing the young man in a somewhat constrained voice, he said: 'Would you mind taking a turn with me, as there are a few things I should like to speak to you about?'

'I shall be most happy, Colonel Punter,' said the young man, wondering what on earth the old boy had to say to him.

No sooner were they well out of earshot than the Colonel turned short on his companion, and said sternly: 'I saw your mother in town yesterday,' and then paused to watch the crushing effect of his words. But no crushing effect was visible; on the contrary, Verner answered in accents of mild surprise:

'You must be thinking of someone else, sir; my mother is at Singapore.'

'No, I am not thinking of anybody else,' said the Colonel, still more sternly; and then added, 'So you are going to brazen it out, are you?'

'Brazen what out?' said the young man, apparently thoroughly puzzled.

'You know very well,' said the Colonel; 'and if you don't, you soon will.' Then he turned on his heel and walked off.

Young Verner stood for a moment looking after him, then walked away, laughing heartily.

At mess that night he was heard to say to a brother-officer: 'You know old Punter, who's here to-night?'

‘Yes,’ replied the other, ‘I know him pretty well. What about him?’

‘He was in India a good deal, wasn’t he?’

‘Yes. Well?’

‘Did he ever get a touch of the sun?’

‘Dare say he did; most people do out there.’

‘Well, if he did, it has affected his brain—poor old boy!’

‘What on earth do you mean?’

‘Why, I mean that the gallant Colonel may have his lucid intervals, but when he met me, just before mess, he was as mad as a hatter.’

‘How mad?’

‘Well, he told me that he had met my mother yesterday in London.’

‘She’s at Singapore, isn’t she?’

‘Yes, and has been for the last twenty years, and so I told him.’

‘What did he say to that?’

‘He said he saw I was going to brazen it out. I said, “Brazen out what?” and he retorted, with a scowl that would have frightened an elephant, that I knew very well. Then he turned and walked off. I could not help laughing at the poor old fellow at the time, he was so desperately serious about it all. However, the sun may do the same for me some day, and I really pity him, for he’s a very good chap when he’s all right.’

‘Oh, a capital fellow,’ replied the other, ‘and can tell a very good story. It’s really very sad. I suppose it must have been a touch of the sun, though I never heard of his being odd before.’

‘He seems all right now, anyway,’ said Verner, looking up the table to where Colonel Punter was sitting.

‘Oh yes, he’s all right now. I’ll tell you what, Verner; I have an explanation. The old boy came down from town by a mid-day train, and I dare say missed his lunch, and what you took for a madman was only a fellow very much in want of his dinner.’ And the two young men laughingly changed the subject.

A few days after this the Colonel was back in town, and found himself dreading considerably the coming interview with the widow. He would have to confirm her worst fears, he was afraid; also, that there would be a scene, and he did not like the idea of it at all. He felt, moreover, that he must appear in the light of a bearer of bad news—a melancholy character which he did not by any means wish to assume in Mrs. Verner’s eyes. ‘However,’ thought

he, 'I shall at any rate have an opportunity afterwards of playing the part of comforter and adviser.' And this reflection seemed to cause him a good deal of satisfaction. It will be seen, therefore, that the Colonel had been somewhat taken (to use the word which he employed in confessing it to himself), or smitten, with Mrs. Verner on the one occasion on which he had seen her, and during the few days that intervened between his return to town and the day on which they had appointed to have their second meeting he found himself constantly regarding that future date with the mixed feelings which have been described above.

The appointed day and hour found Colonel Punter seated in his room trying to read the paper, but in reality waiting a little nervously for Mrs. Verner. She did not keep him long. On entering the room she looked keenly at the Colonel, and, advancing quickly, said in rapid, anxious accents:

'Oh, Colonel Punter, don't keep me in suspense; is it true?' Then seeing his blank look, she cried out: 'It is, and he is dishonoured.' Then she sank into a chair and burst into tears. This the Colonel had prepared himself for, so in his most winning accents he implored her to compose herself. This in a few minutes she partially succeeded in doing, and immediately proceeded to cross-examine him as to what he had found out and done at Aldershot: how there was no doubt in the regiment as to young Verner's being the son of rich people at Singapore, how the Colonel himself had told him so, and how he (Colonel Punter) had in a fit of indignation spoken to the young man himself. For this she mildly upbraided him, reminding him of her request, and the Colonel deprecated her wrath and pleaded sudden impulse. When the story was finished she rose, and, smiling sadly through her tears, said:

'I don't know how I can sufficiently thank you for your kindness to me, Colonel Punter. You have indeed been a true friend, and I should like above all things, if you will allow me, to ask your advice as to what I had better do in this sad matter; but, indeed, I feel quite incapable of doing so on this occasion. Hearing that these terrible reports are true has, as you have seen, upset me very much, and I think I had better go home now; but if you will allow me to fix a future interview by note, when I feel less unequal to the effort, you will add one more to your many kindnesses.'

The Colonel very readily consented, and in another moment

she was gone, and with her, so it seemed to our gallant friend, all light and beauty departed from the room. From that moment, too, though he would hardly have confessed it to himself, he began looking forward to the day when he should see that note upon his table.

A fortnight had elapsed since the interview above detailed, but Colonel Punter had not yet received the expected note. He had not given up hope, but still he was undoubtedly depressed, and, whether it was an effort to throw off this dejection which had induced him to accompany his friend Captain Jones to the Variety Theatre, or whether impelled by fate, or for whatever reason, we will not stop to inquire, but at any rate in that theatre, and comfortably ensconced in two stalls, sat Colonel Punter and Captain Jones on this evening, some of the events of which are about to be related.

The curtain had just fallen on the first act, and the house, till that moment wrapped in gloom, sprang suddenly into light. Then, as if by common consent, every man, woman, and child in that great audience, with a want of manners that would be permissible nowhere else, but which is quite conventional between the acts of a play, commenced, with or without opera-glasses, to scrutinise his or her neighbour. For a few seconds the Colonel had a discussion with his friend as to whether there was time for a cigarette between the acts. This was promptly decided in the negative, and both officers, grasping their glasses, proceeded to join in the 'general inspection.'

With a calmness born of long habit, Colonel Punter was sweeping the house, when suddenly his arm dropped and his gaze became intently fixed on the occupants of a box on the right of the stage; these consisted of two gentlemen and a lady, and the lady was Mrs. Verner. On this point he had no doubt whatever, though he looked at her with ever-increasing surprise, for she was in very full evening dress, and was extensively bejewelled. She was, moreover, at this moment, talking and laughing loudly, not to say boisterously, with her companions, both of whom the Colonel mentally and unhesitatingly pronounced to be cads. At this juncture Mrs. Verner, turning her head suddenly, caught sight of Colonel Punter staring at her from the stalls; the moment their eyes met he bowed, and she also bowed slightly and smiled; then, turning to her companions, she seemed, from their uproarious laughter, to be telling them a more than usually good

story. Captain Jones had observed the mutual recognition pass between his friend and the lady in the box, and was greatly astonished.

'Why, Colonel,' he said, 'do you know her? You don't mean to say that you have had to go to the Hebrews, like younger men?'

'Yes, I know her. But what on earth do you mean by asking whether I've been going to the Hebrews?'

'Well, I think it was a very natural question, under the circumstances.'

'I don't know what you are talking about. Who do you think that lady is, then?'

'I don't think at all, Colonel. I know that she's Mrs. Hart Moss, the female representative of one of the biggest money-lending firms in town; and they tell me she's a very good hand at the business.'

Colonel Punter made no reply, but became plunged in a deep and apparently distressing reverie, for he clenched his fist and almost ground his teeth, until he attracted the attention of Captain Jones, who had, in the meantime, been nodding recognitions to some people of his acquaintance.

'Why, Colonel,' said he, 'what's the matter? The sight of that Mrs. Moss seems to have disagreed with you awfully. Whom did you mistake her for?'

'It has disagreed with me,' said the Colonel grimly, 'but I see it all now. What you say, Jones, is quite true; she is a very good hand at her business.' Then suddenly his countenance brightened somewhat, and he added:

'Come and have something at the club after the play, and, if you will swear secrecy, I will tell you the whole story.'

And he did tell Captain Jones every detail, finishing the narrative with these words: 'So you see she made a regular catspaw of me, in order to find out if Verner was worth powder and shot. I suppose, as his people live abroad, she found difficulties in the ordinary methods of procedure.'

'I expect that you're about right, Colonel. By Jove! she's a clever woman!'

'I wonder she had the audacity, though,' said our gallant friend, his anger boiling up again for a moment. 'Why, I might make the whole matter public.'

'She knew you wouldn't, though.'

'And she's quite right,' said the Colonel, 'for I won't.'

AFTER AUTUMN.

I.

No more the shocks of Corn
 Stand like twin sisters in the sunset glow,
 Nor in the flush of morn
 The ruddy reapers, shouting, come and go.
 Earth's golden fields are gone ;
 And lo, on barren plains the lurid Sun looks down.

II.

With Autumn song has fled ;
 The circling swallow scythes no more the air ;
 Upon its lonely bed
 The drooping floweret pines, despite its prayer,
 Then falls to die
 Unpitied by a soul, unnoticed by an eye.

III.

Yet still in calm serene
 Earth sets her troubled heart to simpler joys,
 And beauty, else unseen,
 On every trembling leaflet seems to poise ;
 The Thistle shakes her gown,
 And from the sable folds, outflows the winged down.

IV.

Each morn the skies are set
 In pearl, weird tinted as a wizard's hall ;
 The spider spreads her net
 Intent to catch the raindrops as they fall,
 And weaves along the road
 Her crystal palaces to teach the world of God.

V.

As after ceaseless rain
The chill dank glades with drifted leaves are stored ;
And by the bleak wind slain
The smitten reed hangs down its useless sword ;
The beech in hues of red
And bronze mimics the dusky bracken's withering bed.

VI.

While round the dying hedge
The sere convolvulus curls amber veils ;
From strips of jutting ledge
The ranks of dewdrops file along the rails :
With every zephyr's breath
Each slips from his frail hold, caught in the arms of death.

VII.

O'er hill and field and wood—
Not sorrow for joys fled, or news of death,
A sovran Calm doth brood,
A dove-like Peace, the sister twin of Faith,
Knowing anew with Spring
All things shall rise again in sweeter blossoming.

VIII.

So let the Winter come
Half like a thief, half like a lover stealing,
And gaze with motions dumb,
On every trembling leaflet downward reeling :
Thereon he'll make a bed
When winds and snows are drear, to lay his hoary head.

NOTES BY A NATURALIST.

HOW I BECAME ONE.

My home as a boy was in a quaint old fishing village close to the edge of the North Kent marshes. The place had an odd, irregular look; one would think its inhabitants had begun building from the shore up inland to a certain point, and then come back and finished along the water's edge. The top rooms of the houses generally projected over the pavement, with queer gables which were ornamented with grotesque figures. By the water stood old mills, warehouses, and shipyards, all having a decayed look. That business of some kind had once been carried on there the old wharves and fine houses showed, but when that was no one about the place in my time knew. It was entirely isolated from any other town or village. Railroads and steamboats were things known only by name to the general community. The odour of fish pervaded the place; whichever way you went, inland, or along shore, you saw fish not only outside but in the houses as well. To this day it is no favourite diet of mine. It is sometimes possible to have too much of a good thing. Nearly all the people got their living on the water. Poor they were, but a contented lot, and, as this world runs, honest. Now and again it would be gently hinted that they smuggled—who can say? the virtuous have enemies; they, perhaps, had theirs. One thing I can testify; if at any time a little medicine was needed, it was sure to come out of a very short-necked dark-green bottle, holding more than a pint, and that medicine was certainly made in Holland. The fishermen and their lads passed our house on their way to and from their fishing-boats which lay at anchor below in the marshes. On the return journey they were sure to have something in the shape of fish or wild fowl—for you would find a duck-gun on board all the boats—and to catch a sight of these was my principal hobby. When they found out this, they never passed the door without showing 'the boy' what they had got. To this day that is my title with the few that are left who knew me as a child. Many were the questions I asked them about bird and fish. I tried to draw on my slate a dead curlew they

had shown me one evening. The next time the net was brought and opened for me to look at I showed them my curlew. From that time dates my roaming in the marshes where the birds lived. I never rested until the kind-hearted fisher-lads had taken me with them to see for myself the birds they talked about. Fortunately for me I could read well as a child, and any book I saw that contained animals or birds I read if I could possibly get at it. Very limited, however, were the publications of those days—at least, for the general public; the children now have books that you could not possibly have bought then for any money; they did not exist.

I was often missed at home; no one knew where I went, and many were the reproofs that I drew upon myself—some of them very forcible ones, for coming home in the pickle I did. At last they let me have my run; the only question asked would be, 'Are you going in the marshes or into the creek?' Many a time have those fishermen brought me home on their shoulders, giving me a string of goggle-eyed flounders or other booty to take indoors, saying, 'Tell 'em you've bin with us.'

Before long I knew where to look for the birds, and could mimic their cries: the shriek of the curlew and his mournful whistle; the pewit (*Vanellus cristatus*), and the note of the stone curlew (*Ædicnemus crepitans*), or thickknee—called in the marshes the king of the curlews. Placing the fingers in the mouth and whistling like the boys do in the street gives one of the bird's cries. I had plenty of room to move about, and no one interfered with me or the birds. It was not necessary. The Bird Preservation Act was not thought about at that time. The plover's eggs were left for the bird to hatch, and if the young were seen they might be picked up just to look at and be let go again. Bird and egg collectors had not reached our neighbourhood.

The miles of marshland teemed with bird-life. When the gun was used it was for the wild-fowl proper—geese, duck, widgeon, teal; but the waders that gave life to the dreary-looking pools were little troubled, for powder and shot with the fishermen meant money. When they fired at a bird they shot at something that would do for dinner. Fish may give you intellectual power, so some learned men say; I know for a fact over much fish-diet does not put much power into the body, and continued for any time it is a delusion.

The wild lands reclaimed in times past, foot by foot, here from the sea would be again under water but for the sea wall which runs mile after mile, and looks just like a railway embankment—very broad at the bottom and narrow on the top, where there is just room for one person to walk comfortably. Well do I remember the time when the sea broke over it like a waterfall. The men had some trouble with their cattle then.

I have watched the life on the marshes at all hours of day and night; in the early morning, when the mist rolled over the lands and the scattered poplars and stunted willows took strange shapes, while the red hares flicked the wet off their hind feet as they sat on the mole hillocks; at midday, when the gulls left the sea to come to the shallow marsh pools to bathe and rest—a pretty sight. Mixed with them you would see the pewits and red-legged sandpipers (*Scolopax calidris*); you would hear them too—the cackle of the gulls, the ‘pewit-pewit’ of the green plover, and the scream of the redshank.

In the evening flight after flight of starlings made their way over the flats to meet in one vast host, in order to go through their drill before settling for the night in the reeds. They rose up and sank down again, turned and twisted as one bird; sang their evening hymn, with chatter and whistle, rush and roar of wings; while from the beach sounded the wailing scream of the curlew.

The marsh lands are bare, with the exception of the rich green grass; and you would not find water-lilies, only reeds and a sort of short flag in the dykes which intersect them in all directions, and which are inhabited by large eels in great numbers. In search of the reed-wren’s nest I got into mud as well as water.

At one particular hour of the afternoon in summer—between five and six o’clock—the marshes shone in a golden light which tinted all things far and near—just such a tone Cuyp gave to his marsh scenes; and, to complete the picture, one saw the men-of-war, frigates, and sloops off the mouth of the Medway in the distance. Turner visited our marshes and painted some of his famous pictures from what he saw there: to wit, ‘Stangate Creek,’ ‘Shrimping Sands,’ and ‘Off Sheerness.’

On the seaward side of the wall, a strip of land ran, about one hundred yards in width from the water’s edge when the tide was out—called the Saltings. It was covered with a tough low shrub having grey-green leaves, *Suaeda*—‘Seablite,’ they named

it—with coarse wiry grass and the seapink; and this was cut up with runs and hollows caused by the rush of the tide. In these, birds would come to feed; my fisher friends moored their boats near the spot, and if they thought a bird would please me it was sure to be got for 'the boy.' One day a lad made a sign to me; I knew what it meant, and followed him to his home. Opening the door, he pointed to something in a corner, saying, 'There, mind he don't nip ye!'

It was a black-backed gull (*Larus marinus*), one of the largest of his kind, quite capable, if I had given him the chance, of wrenching one of my small fingers off.

'Father's just winged him; he ain't hurt you? Come an' draw his pictur.'

I did draw its picture, to his great satisfaction, if not to my own, and made him a present of it.

One day I was missing, for early in the morning a lad had whispered to me, 'Father's boat will come in on the next tide; he's bin away all the week on the fishing ground. Goin' to meet him, ain't 'ee, eh?'

In the evening something was seen moving up the street in front of the fishermen covered with wings. What it was the folks could not at first make out. Coming a little nearer someone shouted, 'It's the boy with his birds!'

The boy went to bed that night in a reflective mood; for he had been corrected in the very forcible manner before hinted at. The next day found him in the creek with a fork tied on to a stick, spearing flounders and catching crabs. The creek was wide, and very shallow when the tide was out; not more than a foot in depth, and the water clear. When the tide was in there was twenty feet of water in the middle.

In our small village each one knew the other; my companions at times were what the present more refined state of society might term 'doubtful.' They lived by the gun. But they were good to me. Many a time have I been with them over the Saltings, close to heel, ready to drop or crawl at a motion when the water spaniel got the scent of fowl. Sure shots and true field-naturalists, they knew them all, and where to find them. I owe my early insight into bird-life to these men, and to an inborn love of all living creatures. Coming past the long shallow pools, my companion would point out the various waders, their bodies reflected in the clear water by the light of the setting sun,

and the tern, with his shuttlecock flight, catching insects and small fish. On one strip of beach I have watched the dotterels (*charadrius hiaticula*) for hours; they nested there—if the spot on the shingle where they laid their eggs could be called a nest.

The man with whom I went out oftenest told me of a struggle he once had with a great sea-eagle that was shot in the wing on the rabbit links in the marsh, just enough to prevent his rising. Many a time have I gazed on that bird; they made no fuss over him, he was not the first of his kind which had visited our shore.

I remember well the day one of my school companions, not much more than a boy, went out with a borrowed boat and a gun, and shot a wild swan—a fine Hooper—dead with the first shot, on a rising tide.

Wandering over the marshes, wading in the creek, exploring the reed beds and swamps, together with having the run of the sea-shore, will go a long way in giving a boy an amount of self-reliance which may be of use to him in the future. Some kind friend sent me a box of water colours, paper, and brushes, and a good lead pencil—a precious gift to me, and a source of joy to my companions, the fisher-lads.

They said the boy could make them 'real good picturs' now, coloured 'nateral as life.' They knew nothing better in the way of art, and I no greater pleasure than to reproduce in my rough fashion the creatures that were a never-failing interest to me; so we were all satisfied.

A good mile from our village stands the grand old parish church, with its massive square tower built of flint stones, a prominent object, which can be seen from far over the water. The churchyard is full of fine old walnut trees; it looks more like a wood than a burial-ground, and it has enough room wherein to bury the dead of twenty parishes. The interior of the church is beautiful; arches supported on pillars rise to the roof in the centre and side aisles. The windows of rare old stained glass throw many varied tints on wall and pavement, in which are slabs inlaid with beautiful brasses of a bygone day—of knight and lady, with hound at foot and hawk on wrist. Suits of armour hang from the walls. The ends of the farmers' stalls are carved in odd and familiar devices, a fox and goose, a pig in a sitting posture, and others equally comic and grotesque. The

pews in which we sat were so high-backed that you could not see the occupants of the next one to your own without standing up. Why so large a church should have been built where so few people were, no one knew. To solve that question one would have to go many generations back. Like the other churches on the coast, it fronted the sea. Many a fisherman has rejoiced at hearing the chimes ring out over the water on a Sunday morning, whilst his boat was making the harbour tide.

In that same church as a boy I got in a pretty pickle. We all went there, rich and poor. There was no organ in it in my days. The mixed choir sang, accompanied by clarionet, viol, and oboe, and real good old-fashioned singing it was. In the same pew with me and my folks sat a shoemaker, a little man, who came in a swallow-tailed brown coat and a stiff stand-up collar reaching to his ears, knee-breeches, worsted stockings, and low shoes. He took snuff, and what a nose he had wherein to put it! He got the nickname of 'Grunter,' because he went to sleep in church as a rule, and snored. Never shall I forget one particular Sunday afternoon. About the middle of the service two starlings had come in and perched on one of the pillars, where they had whistled and chattered their loudest, but no notice had been taken of so common an event as that. But later on the Grunter fell asleep. From hard breathing the sounds in his corner gradually increased until they became pig-like grunts and whines, whilst his nose went working and twisting like a mole's.

I saw a head rise up from the next pew, and a strong hand grasped the Grunter's collar. One good shake, and then the shoemaker's voice was raised loudly, 'For evermore, amen. Eh! What!'

Forgetting the solemnity of the place and time, I burst out in a perfect yell of laughter, which some kind soul smothered as soon as he could by cramming his silk pocket-handkerchief into my mouth. Then they ungently led me out. Oh dear!

When I was about twenty years of age, domestic changes caused me to leave my old marshland home. I parted with my old companions and kind friends with sorrow. Just as I was going a hamper was brought for me. It was a parting gift, and contained water birds and waders, beautiful creatures captured by the fishermen and their lads, as a last gift to 'the boy,' as they still called me.

A WINTER'S DAY IN THE MARSHES.

SOME time after I had settled in Surrey I revisited my old marsh-land home. Such a welcome I received from my boyhood's friends as does me good to think about.

Shooting was the order of the day; and I knew how to use a duck-gun. If I live to be very old, I think I shall never forget the sight of the marshes as they looked in that unusually severe winter-time. For mile upon mile the grass, hedges, dykes, and reed-beds were covered with snow frozen hard on the surface. So deep it lay that it formed an unbroken plain, and it was impossible to tell what you were walking over. The fowl, driven off the water by the fierce north-easters, sought the shelter of the creek, where great masses of ice were crunching together; wild duck, golden-eye, widgeon and teal, with the divers—all tamed by the frost, so that you could get within shooting distance of them. The dunlins (*tringa variabilis*) flew in clouds over the flats. A splendid sight they were, glittering in the sun like silver at one moment, the next becoming invisible as they turned in their flight. The birds were of little use for eating; they were poor as poverty itself, almost starved. Tons of good fresh fish were used as manure on the fields; there was no market for them. They were placed in heaps of about a bushel each at given distances, all over the land. The gulls soon found it out, and the food they could not get on the water they got on the shore. Black-backed gulls, grey, common and black-headed gulls, came with the hooded crows and fought, gorged, and cackled all day long.

The vegetable-feeding wild geese, wariest of birds, flew overhead with slow flapping flight; they were hardly worth shooting; the mud froze on the flats as the ebbing tide left them, so that the sea grass and other marine plants were not available for food. The curlews, mere frames covered with feathers, shrieked and wailed continuously. Such was bird life on the marsh during this terrible winter by day. A hard blue sky formed a background to the long glittering plain.

By night the scene was grand and weird; the sky deep blue, the wild fowl uttering call notes, as they passed and repassed over the stretch of marshland all white and level, on their way to their feeding grounds. Now and again came the subdued

quack of the wild duck at the report of the gun and the fall of his mate, mingled with the whistling of the widgeon and the scape-scape-scape of snipes on the wing; and last, not least, the hoarse cry of the hungry heron.

All at once, yet far off, a cry comes over the flats, as though from a pack of hounds in full cry in the air. Grasping my arm, my companion, a grey-haired old man, says, 'Do yo hear that, boy?'

Yes, I hear. Nearer and nearer it comes; and now is heard the rush of many wings with strange unearthly yelp and bark. The sounds pass over us and then die away in the distance.

'Let the fowl be for to-night, and we will get home; there's bad luck about when the Hell hounds are on the hunt: ¹ you know what took place here? They heard them then; we are standing on the very spot; let us move.'

And the old man drags me on in nervous haste.

I knew the story well. A father and his son—I knew them both—had gone down for the night shooting. The son, unknown to his father, moved from his standing-place. Taking the worsted ball on his boy's cap for the head of a bird, in the dim uncertain light, the man fired and killed him. And there, where we stood and listened to the cry of the air-hounds, above all the cry and clang of wild fowl, the father's terrible cry of agony rang out, 'My son, oh my son!'

The next morning found me in my old haunts again. A hard blue sky was overheard, without a vestige of cloud; the wind blowing bitter keen from the east, and the marshes covered with frozen snow, so deep in many places that few travellers would dare venture out there; but I wanted birds as specimens, and the long-continued cold had made them tame.

The tide is running up, and the birds are on flight from place to place. There are very treacherous traps for the unwary in the saltings—that meadow-like space left between the salt water and the sea wall. To look at it you would think it easy travelling; but the thick growth of the sea blite and coarse grass and rush conceal the runs and dykes made by the rush of the tide, some of which lead to the sluice-gates in the sea wall. The force of the

¹ The strange cries heard in the air, I have no doubt, proceeded from a mixed flight of white-fronted and Barnacle geese (*anser bernicla*), rare visitors on that part of the coast. During that fearful winter birds of a feather did not at all times keep to their own company.

tide opens these in flowing up, and fills all the dykes; when the ebb takes place the gates close again. Four, five to eight feet in depth these runs and dykes are; only a marshman can go safely over these places.

Nothing is to be seen yet but a few hooded crows on the prowl. It is no use to think of shooting the Saltings just now, so we turn into the marsh to look about for a bit: and the curlews (*numenius arquata*) screaming will let us know when the tide has turned. What a long dreary space it is, covered with glittering snow! Here and there the reeds and flags along the dykes have been bowed right over, and form a rough kind of tunneling roofed with snow. It is not of the least use to exercise caution, for the crunch, crunch of the foot tells its tale. But the cold is fearful, and a bird will not leave shelter if he can possibly help it; so we tramp on in the hope of a chance shot.

A dark patch shows on the snow; reaching it we find it is a marsh spring not frozen. Here and there you come upon such; also the footprints of the heron, for the snow is soft round the margins of these springs. There are no signs of the web-footed or hen-footed fowl here; only the heron is about.

The other birds do not like him; for he is always hungry, and his stomach is very accommodating. Near some pollard willows some starved-out fieldfares are bunched up. They utter a feeble 'chuck' at times; their feathers are puffed out, making them look twice their natural size. A gull comes flapping over on the hunt, for a dead or wounded bird is a nice meal for him. From a bunch of dead flags, with a scape-scape-scape up springs a snipe with that twist-and-turn-about flight peculiar to himself and his relatives. He is not fired at, for if there are any fowl in hiding anywhere in his line of flight that cry will move them. It has done so; three mallards rise from a dyke; they are low down and fly straight to where I am standing by the willows; three in a line, their green heads glistening in the sun, and the red brown of their breasts showing distinctly. They are near enough now, I think, two of them at any rate. 'Bang!' 'Quack, quack;' a twist and turn of their necks and bodies tells that they have been hit, but neither bird falls. It serves one right, for it is almost useless firing at fowl coming right at you: the breast feathers are so thick. It is a warning to resist temptation for the future. As we near the Saltings something springs from a patch of dead flag; which we shoot, and it proves to be a fine specimen of the short-

eared owl (*strix brachyotos*), or 'woodcock owl' of the marshmen. His light body and hawk-like flight often lead folks to take him for some other bird. He hunts by day as well as in the evening; any hen-footed fowl, not too big for him, is his prey. The shore shooters know him well; they see him, just as the light begins to fade, come skimming over the flats, now high up, the next moment close to the ground. All at once he stops, and fans with his wings like a kestrel over a tuft of rushes. That fanning of the wings is remarkable; it causes a current of air, much stronger than anyone would imagine, which rattles and stirs the dry rushes, so that any creature that has sheltered there comes out and the owl gets it. His near relative, the long-eared owl, has the same tactics on the heaths and commons which are his hunting-ground. He makes the leaves and twigs rattle with the fanning of his wings in the same way. They do not eat all that they catch at the time, but hide it till wanted, and the contents of their larder would surprise many people.

As we near the sea-wall something shoots over it: a male sparrow-hawk, in full plumage—a fine little fellow. We crouch down in between the hillocks and observe his movements; the bird he was after has taken cover. After a sharp turn or two he settles on a clod of broken-up turf—a perfect study; if you had not seen him perch you might pass close, and not notice him. That tuft of grey sea blite matches his grey back, and a stem of broken bulrush, reddish-yellow, tallies with the hue of his barred breast. To all intents and purposes he is invisible. There is a quick movement, for he has just caught sight of what he had lost for a time; one rapid motion of the head and neck, and the hawk is on the wing. A little 'cheep!' and you see him fly past with a dead pipit (*anthus pratensis*) in his claws. We do not stay to fire at him now, for the curlews are heard crying, a sure sign that the tide has turned. The wind has changed, too, from east to north-east, and blows against the tide, sending the salt-drift driving over the flats, and making the eyes run; a blinding salt-drift is not pleasant any way.

Gaining the foot of the sea-wall, we crouch down for shelter, and listen for the notes of the fowl, driven by the fierce wind off the open sea to seek harbour in the bays and creeks. The curlews are heard above all the rest; then comes the screaming of the redshanks, the cackle of gulls, and the cry of tern (*sterna hirundo*); all combined with the peculiar chatter of thousands of

dunlins or oxbirds (*tringa variabilis*). The fowl are coming up with the wind, so, crawling up the bank, we peep very cautiously out over the Saltings and down the creek. The whole place is alive with hen and web-footed fowl; about a mile away a line of birds is to be seen coming over from the opposite shore; we get quickly back to the bottom of the wall and wait for them. The whistle of their wings is first heard, and then we can distinguish them. Widgeon they are, the feathers underneath shine like white satin. Picking out the leader as he passes by, and aiming a yard in front, we bring him down with a thud, dead. And now the fowl are on the Saltings; their scream, chatter, quack, and whistle all mixed up together, while from the other side of the water comes the sound of the heavy duck-guns hard at work. We slip over the wall, and begin to crawl on hands and knees to the fowl feeding on the very edge of the ebb-tide. Curlews are not to be thought of; they know exactly how far a gun will reach, and keep just the right distance out of harm's way. Besides, they post one of their number for sentry duty. The redshanks are nearly as bad, for they kick up a noise and let all the other birds know that something is crawling along.

A winged curlew, when he runs screaming and wailing over the ooze, will disturb all the birds for a mile or more. Strange to say, they do not fear the fishing-boats, and, concealed from sight by the nets, the men kill them from the deck as they feed on the edge of the tide. If one drops on the water and goes off with the tide, they have him, for a skiff with oars in her is always in tow. In the autumn the curlews visit the turnip-fields in quest of snails, worms, and slugs. One of my old friends has frequently shot them before his pointers, as well as the thick-knee, or stone curlew. A large flock of dunlins have settled on the edge of a pool left by the tide, and look pretty little creatures as they run nimbly about, picking up the small things it has left behind it; a few more yards and they will be near enough to hit, but just as the gun is raised to my shoulder, and my finger touches the trigger, I feel myself very gently sinking. The water has undermined the frozen snow and let me through. The hole forms a hiding-place, leaving my head and shoulders free. Pulling myself together, I look first to see that my gun is right, and fire. Five dunlins and three sanderlings (*arenaria calidris*) to the shot, while one bird flies out to the water's edge and drops. He is not allowed to stop there long, for a grey gull drops down by

the side of the bird and swallows him whole. These gulls are continually beating up and down on the ebb and flow; their bills can dig and tear like a raven's. When wounded they will throw up all they have eaten, and fight for their life on a light stomach. They require careful handling; folks not used to them will put them down quicker than they picked them up, and give them the butt-end of the gun on the head for nipping their fingers. These large gulls, the great black-backed, the lesser black-backed (*larus fuscus*), and the grey, or herring-gull (*larus argentatus*), are not numerous here. They work up and down singly or in pairs, knowing well how to take care of number one. As a rule, they only get shot from the fishing-boats. The common and the black-headed gull are all over; that is to say, the black-headed gull in winter plumage. The fishermen catch as many as they require with hook and line; it is like spinning for pike, as the boat sails along. The line is played out with a small fish on the hook, the gull pounces down, and is caught in the upper mandible. The hooks are made of soft iron, so that they bend freely, and beyond the slight touch of the hook the bird is not injured in the least. The fishermen know exactly when to pull, so that the bird shall not swallow the hook. They eat them, after having buried them for twenty-four hours to take the fishy taste out of them. I have known hooded crows shot and treated in the same manner, and a farmer once told me they were as good as his fowls. His farm-lands faced the sea, and when the dun crows paid their visits to his fields he would take his old flint-locked fowling-piece down from over the chimney, and bring home a couple. I dined with him many times, but prejudice is strong, and I always declined crow with thanks.

Getting under the shelter of the wall, I made my way lower down to the tide, where, crouching under the remains of a stack of reeds, I found a 'shore-shooter'—one who makes his living by means of his gun. By some unlucky chance he had forgotten to fill his powder-flask. The birds are well up on the Saltings, and he has only enough for another charge for his duck-gun. Could I oblige him with a charge? he asked.

'Certainly; with half a dozen, if you like,' was my reply.

'I can't afford to shoot them little hen-footed things,' he remarked; 'powder and shot cost money. Are you after something to stuff? You seems to have some little things done up careful like.'

'Well, yes ; something in that way.'

'Ah, I fancied you was by your shootin'. You let some fowl go by that I should have pulled at. You don't shoot for a livin'?'

'No, I do not.'

'Shall you be down this part any more, think you?'

'Yes, I may, for anything I know.'

'Well, there's some of your sort of birds about here, what you're after, and I could knock a few over for you. Would this one be any good to you? If it is, take it.'

I was glad to have it, for it was a fine specimen of the Kentish plover, or dotterel (*charadrius cantianus*)—a rare bird even here.

'Can you live by your gun?' I asked.

'Sometimes ; last winter I did well, though it was by chance like. It come about this way. I had to go to the marshes at the back of the island, Sheerness ; you don't know it, do you?'

'I know it well.'

'What, the cliffs and the bays? Well, just out from the cliffs, a sort of cloud was movin' about, and then goin' out of sight for a time. Never in my life had I seen such a lot as that ; and by the way they flew I could tell they was black geese.' (Brent geese he meant.) 'Well, I said never a word, but went home and thought about it. Things was lookin' rather glum with me just then, for there was precious little to do. Next mornin' I starts early with my gun and somethin' to eat, and gets there about eight o'clock. You know the place, do you?'

'I know it, a shallow part, covered over with sea grass and weed, and a good nine miles from here.'

'Ah, that's it ; the geese was well sheltered there, with plenty of food, and they'd gathered from all parts. I brought home three couple that night and sold 'em. Then I bought myself powder and shot and a few other things, and went to work. Of course, the farmer what rented the marsh near the place got as many as he liked to have ; he lived five miles from there. I used to leave them for him as I passed on the way home at night, and sometimes ducks for a change. There was a rare lot of coots as well ; they are good to eat, they are, but they clapper claw and scratch like cats if they ain't shot dead. Well, all through the winter I managed middlin' ; rough work at times, mind you, but I lived, and that's somethin'. Mind your own line of work and keep your tongue between your teeth is the best plan when you drop on a

lot of fowl like that. If you let out one half a word, you'll have plenty to help you do the work. My line of work is shootin' fowl, an' I don't want anybody to help me.'

The Kentish plover, he told me, was shot accidentally when he fired at some fowl that had pitched. The wind was blowing a gale when I bade him good-bye; I had my back to it, which was some little comfort.

Presently I heard a little twittering chatter, and some small birds darted past and over the sea-wall into the marsh. There was just light enough to see them as they stood huddled up by the withered flags. I fired my load off at them, and killed two stints (*tringa pusilla*).

On my way home, I met the flight shooters coming down for the night shooting. They carried guns of wonderful make and length, from the very long duck-gun to the short bell-mouthed musketoon. One would think they had ransacked some old armoury. These are handed down from father to son; many of them have flint locks. They are regarded with the greatest respect, and their killing power is considered wonderful. If they go off, a thing that is by no means certain, when the trigger is pulled, the men do kill fowl with them; but they never fire at a single bird; they would term that throwing away a charge. To see the way they are wrapped up you would fancy their owners were afraid of their getting the rheumatics or ague, which evils the guns escape, but their owners do not. No man shoots the flats for any length of time without scraping acquaintance with the bailiffs of Marshland—ague and intermittent fever.

GRETNA GREEN.

THERE is nothing on the last milestone this side of the Border to tell me how far I am still from Gretna. Like an ancient postboy it stands there, moss-grown and blind, deaf and shaky, leaning over towards the earth as though tired out with measuring so faithfully all the way from London. And now its work is done, its plate has fallen away, and, like the bright eyes that once turned to it so eagerly, it is dim and mouldy. How far to Gretna? why, a crack of the whip, a shake of the reins, and see! across a little valley lies Gretna, straggling, broken, white and low. Between runs the Sark, the border stream, fringed with willows, muddily turbulent. I stroll over the angular bridge and up the hill, no longer sprung by willing postboys, white-favoured from Carlisle, and in another moment stand at the head of the village street. There's not a soul to be seen there but the old landlord of the Queen's Head, sunning himself tremulously at his doorway. He's eighty-four, and deaf as the post he steadies himself by. He remembers well how in the month of October, in the year 1818, Lord Erskine skipped through that same doorway with the Marylebone heiress he had just rattled off with down the great north road. There's his signature, diamond-scratched on the window, and in the room he was married in hangs a copy of his certificate. Truly a volatile Lord High Chancellor!

In the old days, assuredly, I should not have had to stand so long knocking, as now I do, at the high priest's door. His outpost acolytes would have seen me coming up the hill, and his services would have been touted me before his less active brethren could have had time to change their working coats; but now, knock as I will, I cannot make him hear; and small wonder, for his old wife tells me he's dead asleep, though the morning is creeping on, and already the autumn sun is high. Poor old gentleman! his occupation at the altar gone, he has to work like commoner people in the fields, and, up at four, he was trudging the miry ways in the dark, and home again at nine to get some rest. So I step softly into his room and wait for him in due time to wake; and, while I wait, glance round the sacred chamber where so often has the knot been tied they came so far to tie—and would have gone afterwards how often how much farther for relief from it! A lowland

cottage, nothing more, this temple of *hymen festinans*, where for three generations the weaver owners have been trading in matrimony as fast almost as they could get witnesses. The floor of the temple is uneven and the ceiling discoloured; an old press for altar, and corner china cupboards for side chapels, and for white-robed choir a clothes-horse, whereon, round the huge fireplace, are drying certain worn garments of the high priest, who comes to me presently, dazed and yawning, in dingy linen canonicals, and braces that trail on the ground like a broken chasuble.

The high priest has all the mysterious dumbness of the augur, besides being only half-awake. He professes to know nothing, except that he and his father and grandfather have been in the business (as well as the weaving) for the last hundred years, and that in the press he keeps the records of his achievements, which for a trifle offered on his shrine he will show me. There have been other high priests, of course, but on the breaking up of the marriage ring—might one say?—they broke up too, and have long disappeared, they and their books. There was the landlord of Gretna Inn, for example, who did a roaring trade down to 1830, when the making of a new road and the building of a new bridge took from his house the privilege of its position, and made the toll-bar keeper's the first over the border. This toll-bar keeper, the blacksmith of fiction (for there never was a marrying blacksmith at Gretna), after dabbling in matrimony in an amateurish fashion took to it seriously in 1843, and between that year and 1857, the year of their destruction, solemnized (if that be the right word) more than eight thousand marriages. In his last year alone he made over eight hundred couples happy. I saw his books afterwards in safe custody in Carlisle, whence they sometimes for legal purposes travel backwards into the London courts of justice, and are duly accepted there as evidence; and I much admired the accurate way in which they were kept, neatly written on printed forms, for the most part by the toll-bar keeper's daughter, without an erasure or a blot. There they were, carefully packed away dry in tin cases, each page a romance, each entry a history. Here's a major in King George's service, runs away with a young lady from Tooting. I don't know, but I dare say he was at his last financial gasp, and she the daughter of chemicals, or whisky, or some plethoric dye; or perhaps, to judge him more charitably, he fell in love with her at first sight, strolling across the common, and, having nothing but his Peninsular medals to recommend him, did well to carry her off. At

any rate they were married at the toll-bar, for there's the major's bold fist and Alicia's trembling missish signature. And here's a young French lady from the Bloomsbury district trips off with a country gentleman of Bedfordshire. Now who on earth was she? French governess, milliner, adventuress of some *Palais Royal* sort? Or do I wrong Clotilde, and was she, after all, the fair daughter of some honest officer *en retraite* in Bedford Row, ruined by the Bourbons, and with a beard he never shaved since Moscow? And here's the daughter of an Irish baronet gives her little hand to a young gentleman of Devon, and, slipping over in the Holyhead packet, meets him at Chester and is off with him north, with post-boys at ten guineas a stage. And here, the pages mysteriously wafered together, I can just peep in upon a legal light whose accurate hand figures over his bride's servant-maid scrawl. There are these and thousands more, and as I turn the pages I can hear all their sighs, oaths, protestations. I hear the clicking of bedroom door-keys on rebellious daughters, and the rustle of the soft-hearted housemaid, Mary, slipping a note under her young mistress's door. I hear the whistle under the window and see the perilous descent, the flight through the dark garden, the post-chaise waiting, and can plainly distinguish the slam of the door and the grind of the wheels as they rattle off for Barnet and the first change. There the children crowd round the window for pence and fresh horses are brought out, and the bridegroom stretches his legs and looks backward down the hill towards London. And off they flourish again, and just outside the town pass the Liverpool High Flyer, whose guard recognising their condition gives them a jovial tootle on the horn.

Meantime, my own particular high priest has fetched his own books and spreads them before me. His earliest date is 1771, his latest but ten days ago, when according to the Scottish laws he joined a couple of devoted servants. He has a printed form now, steam printed, that he gives the happy pair in proof of their union. At the top there is a woodcut of the sacramental cup and the open Bible; underneath runs—

Kingdom of Scotland,
County of Dumfries, Parish of Gretna.

These are to certify, to all whom they may concern, that ———, from the Parish of ———, in the County of ———, and ———, from the Parish of ———, in the County of ———, being now both here present, and having declared to me that they are Single Persons, have now been married after the manner of the laws of Scotland:

As witness our hands at Gretna, this — day of —, 18—.

Witnesses

The whole enclosed in a neat border with fancy turns like the spirals of a passion flower. But all that is the new order, and about his old books there's nothing so neat. They look just like what I imagine in most cases they were, records of haste, irregularity, ill-judgment; they are for the most part dirty, blotted, torn. The witnesses many of them could not write—often they were the postboys; frequently the happy pair themselves could only put their mark, for at the time of the great Carlisle hiring fairs of Martinmas and Whitsuntide the lads and lasses would stream out on foot and in wagons and carts and be married by the score. In those days it was cheaper than church, there were no banns to be put up, no expensive fees; and then the lady possessed the inestimable advantage of being able to strike while the iron was hot, could carry her swain off in a dogcart and bring him back, firmly and irrevocably wedded. It was, in fact, this wholesale slaughter—matrimony distributed as Charlemagne distributed Christianity to his soldiers, by platoons—that in a great degree carried the measure of 1857; for, as fitting end to the day's fairing, dozens of young couples would very commonly enter into the holy state and after a day or two of each other's society never see each other again, nor in any way regard the ceremony as binding. Still, though many of the high priest's clients could not write, there were many who could; witness Lord Erskine, and Lord George Coventry, who espoused Lady Mary Beauclerk in 1811, and—to mention no names more recent—members of the H.E.I.C.S., and reputable merchants of Hâvre de Grace, and many baronets' sons and sprigs of nobility without number, whose dashing signatures flourish next the scrawl of Mary Graham from the neighbouring farm, and the unsteady cross of her young man, John Hewetson. The high priest is proud of his *clientèle* and his principles. He is proud to say he never was among the number of those who used to tout on the platform on the arrival of the trains from the south, in white tie and wrapped in plaids like the herds; nor would he, honest fellow, ever consent to falsify or mutilate his books, though time after time he has been offered money to destroy troublesome evidence. Perhaps that is the reason why he is still only plain high priest, without preferment; with a living, it is true, but a living to get in the fields, among a flock purely animal.

If I try to trace the Scotch marriage, I find it nebulously lost in the ancient lowland custom of *hand-fisting*. Whether the

custom existed before the Reformation or not I cannot say, but certainly in the fifty years or so immediately following the dissolution of the monasteries—that is to say, the latter half of the sixteenth century, when the mass priests had all disappeared and before the new Protestant pastors had been properly distributed or appointed—there was in the extreme north of England and south of Scotland such a dearth of the officiating clergy that the people there were driven to the primitive practice of matrimony, by choosing their wives and taking them home without ceremony of any kind, on the understanding that the contract was in existence for a year and a year only, and could be rescinded at the end of that time on the due and proper complaint of either of the parties. If there were no complaint, the quasi-contract became complete and indissoluble; if the complaint were substantiated, the complaining party had to bear the charge of the child or children of the union. That such a custom was not entirely confined to the lower classes is clear from the inspection of the family records and pedigrees of that part of the country, whereby it is evident that many of the highest rank were in the habit of *hand-fisting* their spouses. But now for hasty English couples there is no such matrimonial refuge as once the lowland village afforded so recklessly. Now, for a proper Scotch marriage, a three weeks' residence in the country for either bride or bridegroom is necessary; and those three weeks must be of the most complete character, each day calculated from dawn till dusk and not from hour of one day across into the same hour of the next. There is a well-known leading case that decides that a couple crossing the border at four in the morning of the first of June and married at eleven on the twenty-first, were not according to the Scotch law duly and properly married, and their marriage was accordingly annulled.

PRESIDENT KELLER.

ON a stormy night of September, 1816, the chief magistrate of the canton of Lucerne, an elderly man, named Keller, started from the casino in the town, along with his two daughters, at half-past eight, for his house some short distance from the town, down the bank of the river Reuss. The two young ladies were in white evening dresses, and were unprovided with cloaks, though they had umbrellas, for the rain had come on suddenly and unexpectedly.

There was a footpath along the bank of the Reuss, in some places high above the foaming, swirling stream, in others approaching the water's edge. To prevent horses taking this path there was a turnstile at the entrance to it, outside the Noelli Gate of the town. The old President passed through the turnstile and then offered his arm to his eldest daughter, who declined it, because she had to battle with the wind and rain behind her umbrella and needed both hands. She went forward, then the magistrate followed, and lastly came the second daughter, also with her head down behind her umbrella.

The clouds became thicker, the night darker, and the rain fell heavier.

'Papa,' said the eldest, feeling something thrust against her, 'is that your umbrella pushing me aside?'

No answer.

When the younger girl peeped on one side of her screen she caught a glimpse of her elder sister's white fluttering gown, but did not see her father, who was in black. Presently both girls found they had strayed from the path, and called to each other and to their father. The old man made no reply. In another moment the young ladies recovered the path, and pressed on, one some three hundred paces behind the other, and their father, as they believed, between them. Here the path became slippery, and the elder, turning, called to her father to keep immediately behind her, and be cautious how he walked lest he should fall into the river. She moreover relaxed her pace to allow the old man to catch her up.

The second sister, hastening on, saw her elder sister waiting where there was a rail, but just then she lost her shoe in the

mud and halted to grope for it. As she could not find it, she resolved to remain under her umbrella till her father and sister should reach home, and, missing her, return with a lantern, when she would be able to recover her shoe. The house was not far off, and she saw the front door open and her sister stand in the lighted entrance. A few minutes later the servant-girl came with a lantern and helped her to find her shoe.

‘Papa is home?’ said the young lady.

‘No, miss, not yet.’

‘But—he was between my sister and me.’

In fact, the old President had vanished in the night from between his two daughters at hardly a hundred and fifty paces from each.

As soon as Salesie Keller, the elder daughter, learned that her father was not behind with her sister, she at once bade the servant attend her; they would return along the path in search of the old man. Moreover, the younger sister accompanied her in the search. They had not gone far before the lantern was extinguished by the wind. Near at hand was the house of the Amtman Pfyffer. They went to his door and asked to have the light rekindled. He was in his dressing-gown, having his supper. He at once pulled on his boots, took another lantern, and assisted in the search, along with some of his servants. It was in vain. The President had vanished. Not a cry had been heard by the daughters; noiselessly he had disappeared from between them.

The Amtman at once hastened into the town to inquire at the casino whether the old gentleman had returned to it. It was possible he might have strayed like his daughters in the dark, become bewildered, and thought it best for him to return whence he had started. But Justice Keller was not there.

Then he went to the Councillor of State, Am Rhyn, the second in authority after Keller, and communicated the disappearance to him.

Nothing further was done that night—nothing well could be done—on account of the darkness and storm. Next morning, September 15, the body of the lost man was discovered in the river on a sandbank about two hundred yards from the spot where he was thought to have fallen into the Reuss. The corpse was at once recovered and examined. The expression of the face was calm; mouth and eyes closed, the fingers clenched in the hollow of each hand. His purse was in his pocket; the watch had stopped at 9.26. Keller therefore had died between 8.30 and 9.26.

slight bruise was on the side of the nose and another on the brow, apparently caused by his fall.

As Keller had been subject to fits for many years, it was concluded that he had been overtaken by one of these whilst walking close to the water's edge, and had fallen in. There was not the smallest trace of violence to be seen on the corpse, and not the least doubt existed that the death was accidental.

The deceased had been a man generally liked; he was at the head of the Liberal party, and a very keen politician; but even his most bigoted opponents could say nothing against his personal character, and respected him as a man of integrity. We have called Keller President. He was, in fact, the chief magistrate of the canton, and bore the predicate of 'Excellency.' The Liberal party were then dominant, and Keller, as head of the canton, represented its domination.

So the matter remained for nine years, and no one had the least suspicion but that the death of Keller had been accounted for in the only way in which it could be accounted for consistently with the evidence. But, nine years later—in 1825—*five* persons confessed to having been involved in a conspiracy to murder him, and to have taken part in his death.

This was the occasion of a trial which created the greatest interest in Switzerland, excited the most violent partisanship, necessitating the withdrawal of the case from the hearing of a Lucerne to a Zurich judge, led to the calling of an enormous crowd of witnesses whose depositions fill fifteen volumes and exhibit a most extraordinary amount of self-delusion. It is moreover a case eminently instructive, for it shows to what an extent party feeling may cloud the mind and darken judgment.

In the Swiss republic exists an entire class of men, of unknown numbers, who enjoy and passionately cling to a freedom more extensive than the most democratic of republics accords. This is the great class of Doerfers, or the Homeless. They are Swiss, and belong to no canton. They are subject to no authority but that of the police, who drive them from place to place. In a country where every effort is made to break up property equally among all children of rich or poor, with the object of giving all a fixed habitation and a means of existence, this great class of proletariates has grown to large numbers and to be a general difficulty, if not a danger. When a band enters one canton the authorities pass it forward to the next, and the German frontier is watched by the

police against invasion by them. If any cross the border, they are inexorably arrested and cast back on the free Swiss soil. They have even been executed in some of the cantons, at the beginning of this century, because the cantons were without other means of disposing of them. They profess to carry on the trades of tinkers, spinners, bird-sellers, broom-sellers, ratcatchers; but these trades are merely the disguises behind which they beg and steal.

Of their origin nothing certain is known; they are recruited from the ill-conditioned in every canton. Their existence was well known, but no particulars concerning them till the famous trial of 1825 in the matter of the death of Keller, when much light was thrown on their mode of life.

They are all related or connected, and have no very fixed surnames. They occupy no houses; in summer they camp out under the trees or in the mountains about their fires, and in winter sleep where they can—in barns and outhouses. It might please a poet or novelist to describe their life as joyous and free from care, but, as a fact, their existence is one prolonged heartbreaking misery. They rarely frequent high-roads, but steal about by mountain paths or hide among the recesses of the forest.

In the May of 1824 a burglary was effected in the house of a shopkeeper at Naefels, in Glarus. A few weeks later a girl was arrested in Schwyz who was found disposing of some of the stolen property. She gave her name as Clara Wendel, and her age as twenty. She was taken to Glarus and there imprisoned. After the general continental custom, a *juge d'instruction* examined her in prison repeatedly, and endeavoured to extract a confession from her by working on her hopes and fears.

After she had been thus cross-questioned twenty-eight times, her reserve gave way, and she began to communicate information, not only concerning the burglary at Naefels but concerning a hundred other robberies and burglaries, and other crimes that had been committed and whose perpetrators had been undiscovered during several preceding years. Her brother John was a daring and dreaded robber. Her brother-in-law, Joseph Twerenbold, had been in a Swiss regiment, but had voluntarily associated himself to the Homeless, and was a notorious thief. As the crimes now being brought to light affected other cantons besides Glarus, and as the prisons in Glarus would not contain the numbers accused of participation in them by Clara Wendel, the canton of Glarus appealed to Lucerne to assist in the investigation, and Lucerne readily consented to do so. A Doctor Heer, a worthy

physician, was commissioned to examine not only Clara but also all the rest of those held in durance under suspicion of implication in the crimes of which Clara had revealed her knowledge, and to report on what he learned. It is, by the way, singular that this duty should have been committed to a medical man, and not to a lawyer.

Dr. Heer soon became bewildered by the contradictions in the confessions and answers he received in cross-examination, and he requested Am Rhyn, son of the President who had succeeded Keller, to take the burden of the examination upon him. He was a man of great energy and enthusiasm, and went to work with hearty good will and unflagging patience. All at once the rumour spread through Lucerne that Clara Wendel had confessed that she, along with several of her relatives, had been implicated in the death of Keller.

She had, indeed, hinted something of the sort on December 10, 1824, and again on February 10, 1825; but so little credence was given to what she said, the examining magistrate being so satisfied that Keller had met with an accident, that she was not pressed on this matter. On September 23, 1825, however, she made a full disclosure of the murder, and she, as well as those implicated in it, were subjected to reiterated cross-examination between that date and November 3 in the same year. The story then revealed was to this effect. On September 14, 1816, Clara, her brother John, her sister Barbara, Twerenbold, the Kappelers, father and son, and two others, were camping in a wood about four miles from Lucerne, when they came to the town, and entered a tavern outside the Basle gate. There they met a comrade, Toni, who bade them follow him to a low public house, 'The Dove,' in the town. There they met a doctor, Carraggioni by name, and he treated them to wine. Towards evening they left the 'Dove' in two parties, and met again near the house of Keller and Pfyffer. Here they were accosted by a servant of the Amtman Pfyffer, who invited them into the house, where they were given more drink. Pfyffer was present and drank with them. Whilst there they, or some of them, blackened their faces and left the house. As they left Pfyffer cautioned them to be careful and do thoroughly what they had undertaken. They waited by the side of the path along which they knew that Keller would return. Clara and Barbara stood some way back, and Twerenbold and Kappeler took turns to watch near the turnstile. They were now joined by two others, Maria Ulrich and a policeman, Kratz, who belonged to the band though in the service of the state. After the signal had

been given that the President had passed the turnstile, John Wendel crept along to the most dangerous part of the way, where it approached the edge of the rock above the river; with him were two others, old Kappeler and Fridolin Zimmerman. The darkness was sufficient to conceal them till the President was close to them, and then these three men grasped him by the throat and chest, and in a moment hurled him over into the river. Then they went to Pfyffer's house, and Clara was there and heard the two daughters of the deceased man enter and ask for assistance to prosecute their search for their father.

They waited, in concealment, in Pfyffer's house till all was safe, and then they returned to the town to Dr. Carraggioni, who paid them for what they had done, according to Clara, five louis d'or, but, according to Barbara and John Wendel, four dollars. Twerenbold and young Kappeler would not allow they had been paid so much as that.

From Carraggioni's the party returned to their camp in the wood, and there only did John Wendel wash the black off his face.

Old Kappeler, who according to the account of the rest was the ringleader, obstinately and persistently denied all cognisance of the murder; but all the rest, John Wendel, young Kappeler, Twerenbold, Clara, and Barbara, confessed—that is, all the rest who had been named who were in the hands of justice. Kratz was dead, and Maria Ulrich and Fridolin Zimmerman had not been caught. Twerenbold, however, could not remember the names of the Amtman and the doctor who had instigated the murder, but he described their houses circumstantially.

Five persons confessed themselves involved in a capital offence. They could gain nothing by such a self-accusation; on the contrary, they rendered themselves liable to execution. If these five had only accused two respectable citizens of Lucerne of having plotted the murder, nothing might have been thought of the charge, but when they accused themselves of having perpetrated it at the instigation of the others, the charge was invested with a more serious character.

On the discovery of the body of President Keller, the daughters had not been required to give evidence; now they were questioned, and the eldest remembered the thrust she had received, after she had passed the turnstile. She had then exclaimed, thinking her father had pushed her with his umbrella; but was it not possible that this was really the thrust of one of the murderers hastening by to the place destined for the execution of the crime? The

men confessed to having seized the old magistrate by his chest, and on reference to the protocol of the investigation of his body, it was ascertained that there had been some wrench or tear at his waistcoat and trouser pocket, which had been attributed to the catching of the garments in points of rock or of tree stumps.

Two eminently respectable burghers of Lucerne were accused of an atrocious crime, both members of old esteemed families, men generally respected, advanced in years—Pfyffer was aged seventy, and was a man of official position. And—for what object had they committed this crime by the hands of hired assassins?

They both belonged to the opposite political faction, and faction had been running high in the canton. Political fanaticism had impelled two sober citizens to compass the murder of the President of the canton because he belonged to the Liberal party. But what would they gain? The presidency would not fall to their side. The deputy-president, Am Rhyn, a more extreme Liberal than Keller, stepped into his room. As may well be supposed, the question of the guilt or innocence of the two citizens became a burning one, and was hotly contested, and made altogether a party matter. In vain did Pfyffer and Carraggioni ask to be shown the minutes of the confessions of the five persons who accused them and themselves; they could not obtain a sight of them. They were arrested, and hidden to prepare for trial.

But now the Pope interfered. Some of those who had confessed their participation in the crime asserted that the papal nuncio resident at Lucerne had been privy to the plot. The Pope complained to the Federal Council at Berne, and the Federal Council appointed Justice Escher of Zurich to hear the case.

The result of this strictly impartial investigation was most extraordinary.

As already said, Dr. Heer, a physician, had been entrusted by the authorities of the canton with the examination of the vagabonds who filled its jail, and he, feeling himself unequal to the task, had handed it over to Am Rhyn, son of the President, who called to his aid a lawyer named Rikenbach. It would seem that Rhyn, on hearing Clara Wendel's confession that she had been present at the murder of Keller, gave complete credence to her story, and set to work to extract confirmation from those she incriminated. When they denied all knowledge of the matter, he had them confined in solitary dungeons and given only bread and water. John Wendel was brought to admit what was required in this way. On April 16, 1825, he was condemned to bread and

water till he thought fit to admit his guilt; as on May 2 he still denied it, he was fastened in such a manner with chains as to be in a bent position. On May 6, as he still denied all knowledge of it, he was beaten and his hands fastened by handcuffs to the gyves that held his feet. Not, however, till June 6, could the confession be wrung from him. On one occasion he was whipped for two hours. The rest of the witnesses were allowed to associate together and arrange their stories they were to tell, so as to make them agree. When there still remained divergences in their accounts, leading questions were put to them, and they were made to correct their inaccuracies so as to bring all the stories to fit together.

When, however, the investigations began under the Zurich judge, it was otherwise; the five culprits varied in their accounts in the most extravagant manner. Clara Wendel remembered, for instance, that the President was walking along, reading a book, when her brother and the others thrust him into the water, and explained that the daughters did not see it, because they were both some way on in front. It does not appear that Am Rhyn was conscious that he was acting wrongly, and forcing five persons to falsely incriminate two innocent men. He was perfectly convinced in his own mind that they had murdered Keller, and their denials, evasions, and inaccuracies he put down to wilful attempts to escape confession and obscure the truth. The system of having recourse to torture to extract a confession was general in Switzerland and Germany, and was disapproved of only by the most enlightened men. Am Rhyn was an ardent politician, a fanatic in his way, and because these two old men belonged to the opposite party, and were, indeed, leaders of it, he considered them capable of committing any crime, and so was led on by his own bigotry to the concoction of a false accusation which might, and indeed very nearly did, cost them their lives.

As it was, an impartial judge speedily brought falsehood to self-conviction, and Plyffer and Carraggioni were discharged as innocent.

The reason of Clara Wendel's confession of having been implicated in a murder which had never taken place proved to have arisen out of her craving for notoriety. She was a vain and garrulous girl, and she believed she would be regarded as of some consequence, and become an object of popular interest, if she pretended that she had assisted in causing the disappearance of the president of the canton which held her in confinement.

